



DUKE  
UNIVERSITY



DIVINITY SCHOOL  
LIBRARY






1878

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON

NEW YORK, 1878

AMERICAN TRADING COMPANY



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
Duke University Libraries

THE  
//  
L I F E

OF

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON:

WITH

BRIEF EXTRACTS FROM HIS WRITINGS.

---

PUBLISHED BY THE  
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,  
150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW-YORK.





## CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE, AND WHILE MINISTER AT NEWBOTTLE, SCOTLAND, AND  
PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH. 1611-1661.

Parentage—Early Life—Conversion—Academical Course—  
Residence at Douay, France—Enters on the Ministry at  
Newbottle, near Edinburgh—Meekness and Fidelity as a  
Pastor for eleven Years—Indifference to the loss of Money  
—Calmness in Danger—Is chosen Principal of the Uni-  
versity of Edinburgh—His Fidelity to this Trust for ten  
Years . . . . . Page 5

## CHAPTER II.

WHILE BISHOP OF DUNBLANE, SCOTLAND, AND ARCHBISHOP OF  
GLASGOW. 1661-1674.

Reluctantly accepts the Office of Bishop—Chooses the less  
conspicuous See of Dunblane—Avoids Public Display—  
Spirituality and Fidelity to his Charge—Cherishes a Pious  
Ministry—Dissuades from Controversy—Grieved by Acts  
of Oppression, he visits the King and proposes to resign—  
Second visit to the King—Appointed Archbishop of Glas-  
gow—Ineffectual Efforts for Peace—Faithfulness to the  
Clergy—Letters Describing the State of Things—Visits  
London, and tenders his Resignation—His Reasons for re-  
signing . . . . . 17

## CHAPTER III.

FROM HIS RESIGNING THE CHARGE OF ARCHBISHOP TO HIS DEATH.  
HIS CHARACTER AND CORRESPONDENCE. 1674-1684.

His love of Retirement—Retires to Broadhurst, Sussex—The  
King requests him to mediate between Parties in Scotland—  
Attack of Pleurisy, and sudden Death in London—Bishop  
Burnet's Eulogy—His Person—Illustrations of his Charac-

ter and Piety—His love of Prayer, of the Scriptures, of the Sabbath, of Holiness—Union with Christ—Renunciation of Worldly Pleasures—Anecdotes—The Secret Things of God—When to Speak—Sympathy with the Afflicted—Humility—On the Death of a Child—Natural Scenery and Music—Desire to depart . . . . . Page 53

## CHAPTER IV.

### BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS WRITINGS.

His Powers of Mind and Stores of Knowledge—His Character eminently Evangelical—Unction of his Sermons and Writings—Beautiful Selections—Practical and Experimental Character of his Productions—Commentary on Peter, on the Lord's Prayer, on the Ten Commandments, etc.—Testimony of Dr. Doddridge—On Christian Union and other topics—Rules for a Holy Life . . . . . 98

THE  
LIFE  
OF  
ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

---

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE, AND WHILE MINISTER AT NEWBOTTLE, SCOTLAND,  
AND PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

NOTHING particular is recorded relative to the remote ancestors of Archbishop Leighton. His father, Dr. Alexander Leighton, a Scots' clergyman, was settled in London in the reign of King Charles I. He suffered very severely from the arbitrary measures of those times, being treated with much cruelty in the year 1630, by the sentence of the *High Commission* Court, and the *Star Chamber*; two oppressive tribunals which then existed. But we need not dwell upon the painful subject. Let us be thankful for the privileges that we enjoy, and endeavor to improve them to our own spiritual advancement, and the extension of the cause of Christ at home and abroad.

Dr. Alexander Leighton had four children who

attained maturity ; two sons, and two daughters, of whom Robert was the eldest : his place of birth appears to have been Edinburgh, and the time, the year 1611.

Robert Leighton, after being instructed in the common parts of education, and initiated into the higher branches, was sent to the University of Edinburgh. From the authority of his sister, we learn that his early youth was distinguished by great teachableness and attention, and that his parents were greatly pleased with his extraordinary indifference to the common follies of childhood and youth.

Highly as Robert Leighton was favored in his religious education, and distinguished as he was above other youth, he deeply felt the depravity of human nature ; and frequently adverts, in his writings, to man's natural state. The following extract will show his sentiments on this subject : " The soul of man, unconverted, is no other but a den of impure lusts, wherein dwell pride, uncleanness, avarice, malice, etc., just as Babylon is described in Rev. xviii. 2 ; Isa. xiii. 21. Were a man's eyes opened, he would as much abhor to remain with himself in that condition, ' as to dwell in a house full of snakes and serpents,' as St. Augustine says. And the first part of conversion is at once to rid the

soul of these noisome inhabitants, for there is none at all found naturally vacant and free from them.” “The estate of lost mankind is indeed nothing but darkness, being destitute of all spiritual truth and comfort, and tending to utter and everlasting darkness.”

We have no particulars of the way in which the mind of Leighton was brought from nature’s darkness into the light of the Gospel; this probably is owing to his retired habits, and the public confusions of those times.

At an early age, however, he gave strong indications of that eminent piety for which he was afterwards distinguished. He also showed that he possessed considerable talents for the acquisition of knowledge. His views and studies were directed toward the Christian ministry from an early period of his life. By his quick progress in learning, he excited the admiration of his fellow students, while he gained their esteem by the gentleness of his temper and the prudence of his conduct. His good behavior and talents also attracted the attention of his superiors; and one of them, in a letter to Dr. Leighton, congratulated him on having a son in whom Providence had made him abundant compensation for his sufferings.

Young Leighton finished his academical course

with great applause. After taking his degree, he went abroad, and lived several years in France, particularly at Douay, where some of his relations resided. Here he appears to have met with some persons whose lives were formed on the strictest rules of self-denial, and his future character appears to have been somewhat influenced by their example.

On his return to Scotland, having passed through the usual course of trial for the ministry in that country, he was unanimously called by the congregation of Newbottle, near Edinburgh, and was ordained there about the thirtieth year of his age, on the 16th of December, 1641. In postponing to so ripe an age his entrance on the ministry, as well as in retiring so early as he did from its more laborious province, he acted agreeably to his avowed opinion, that "some men preach too soon, and some too long." His judgment of what is most reverent toward God corresponded with those canons of the Levitical economy, which prescribe a mature age for engaging in the more arduous department of the sacerdotal office, and grant an honorable superannuation at that period of life, when the strength of mind and body commonly begins to decay.

Leighton remained at Newbottle several years; and proved himself to be a workman who needeth

not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. He was most assiduous in discharging the various duties of his office. His preparation for the pulpit was very exact. He diligently visited the poor, the sick, and afflicted of his flock ; and promoted personal, domestic, social, and public religion to the utmost of his power, by precept, example, and many prayers. This faithful minister of Christ lived in a plain and retired manner ; he had an utter aversion to mixed company ; was extremely cautious in the choice of his friends ; and was never happier than when engaged in the duties of his office, or in his closet, storing his comprehensive mind with sacred knowledge, and communing with his own heart and with God.

His mind was not fitted for bustle and strife. Partly from timidity and modesty, partly from his inclination for peace, he seldom attended meetings of the presbytery, or of ministers and elders from neighboring congregations. He was, however, occasionally present ; and it being the custom for the presbytery to inquire of the several brethren, twice a year, "Whether they preached up the times?" Leighton, when thus interrogated, acknowledged his omission, and apologized for it, saying, "If all the brethren have preached up the *times*, may not one poor brother be suffered to preach up Christ Jesus

and eternity?" It was his aim not to win proselytes to a party, but converts to Jesus Christ.

The superiority of Leighton's mind to temporal things, was also clearly manifested by his indifference to worldly riches. At his father's death he came into possession of about a thousand pounds, which sum was, in fact, his whole property. This he placed in the hands of a merchant, without adequate security. His brother-in-law, Mr. Lightmaker, urged him to come to London to vest it more safely. Leighton's reply is characteristic: the following is an extract:

"I thank you for your letter. That you give me notice of, I desire to consider as becomes a Christian, and to prepare to wait for my own removal. Any pittance belonging to me may possibly be useful and needful for my subsistence; but truly, if something else draw me not, I shall never bestow so long a journey on what I account so mean a business. Above all things, I wish for myself and you all, our daily increase in likeness to Jesus Christ, and growing heavenwards, where he is who is our treasure." In a short time the merchant failed, and Leighton's patrimony was lost. The following letter to his brother-in-law will show the spirit with which he bore this trial:

"Your kind advice I cannot but thank you for,



but I am not easily taught that lesson. I confess it is the wiser way to trust nobody ; but there is so much of the fool in my nature, as carries me rather to the other extreme, to trust everybody. Yet I will venture to take the best means I can in that little business you write of. It is true, there is a lawful, yea, a needful diligence in such things ; but, alas ! how poor are they to the portion of believers where our treasure is.

“ The little that was in Mr. E.’s hands has failed me ; but I shall either have no need of it, or be supplied some other way. And this is the relief of my rolling thoughts, that while I am writing this, this moment is passing away ; and that all the hazards of want and sickness shall be at an end. My mother writes to me, and presses my coming up. I know not yet if that can be ; but I intend, God willing, so soon as I can conveniently, if I come not, to take some course that things be done as if I were there. I hope you will have patience in the mean time. Remember my love to my sisters. The Lord be with you, and lead you in his ways.”

When Leighton visited England, and his recent loss was adverted to by Mr. Lightmaker, who regretted that he had misplaced his confidence, “ Oh, no more of that,” cried Leighton, “ the good man has escaped from the care and vexation of that

business.” “What, is that all you make of the matter?” rejoined his brother-in-law, with surprise: “Truly,” answered Leighton, “if the Duke of Newcastle, after losing nineteen times as much of yearly income, can dance and sing, and the solid hopes of Christianity will not avail to support us, we had better be as the world.”

Leighton, in his writings, often speaks of the world in a way consistent with his superiority to its cares and pleasures. Hence he observes, “Our Saviour tells us expressly, that man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth; Luke xii. 15. Think you great and rich persons live more content?—believe it not. If they will deal freely they can tell you the contrary, that there is nothing but a show in them, and that great estates and places have great grief and cares attending them, as shadows are proportioned to their bodies.

“And if they have no real crosses, luxury frames troubles to itself, variety of dishes corrupting the stomach, and causing variety of diseases; and vain discontents arise, that trouble men as much as greater, be it but this hawk flies not well, or that dog runs not well, to men whose hearts are in those games.

“So then I say, this is first to be regulated; all

childish vain needless cares are to be discharged, and, as being unfit to cast on thy God, are to be quite cast out of thy heart. Entertain no care at all but such as thou mayest put into God's hands and make his on thy behalf,—such as he will take off thy hand, and undertake for thee.

“All needful lawful care, and that only, will he receive: so then rid thyself quite of all that thou canst not take this course with, and then, without scruple, take confidently this course with all the rest. Seek a well-regulated sober spirit. In the things of this life be content with food and raiment; not delicates, but food; not ornament, but raiment; and conclude that what thy Father carves to thee is best for thee, the fittest measure, for he knows it, and loves thee wisely. This course our Saviour would have thee take, Matt. vi. 31; first to cut off superfluous care, then to turn over on thy God the care of what is necessary. He will look to what thou hast engaged him for, and he can and will give thee beyond that if he sees it fit.”

These views of superiority to worldly cares and anxieties were not mere theory. The following incident showed his admirable self-possession in the prospect of death. He had taken the water at the Savoy Stairs, in company with his brother, Sir Ellis Leighton, his lady, and some others, and was

on his way to Lambeth, when, owing to some mismanagement, the boat was in great danger of sinking. While the rest of the party were pale with terror, and most of them crying out, Leighton never for a moment lost his accustomed serenity. To some who afterwards expressed their astonishment at his calmness, he replied, "Why, what harm would it have been if we had all been safe landed ON THE OTHER SIDE?" In the habit of dying daily, and of daily conversing with the world of spirits, he could never be surprised or disconcerted by a summons to depart out of the body.

Another anecdote will show his pious calmness in the time of danger. During the civil wars, when the royal army was lying in Scotland, Leighton was anxious to visit his brother, who bore arms in the king's service, before an engagement which was daily expected to take place. On his way to the camp he was benighted in the midst of a vast thicket, and having deviated from the path, he sought in vain for an outlet. Almost spent with fatigue and hunger, he began to think his situation desperate; and dismounting, he spread his cloak upon the ground, and knelt down to pray. He calmly resigned his soul to God, entreating, however, that if it were not the Divine pleasure for him then to conclude his days, some way of deliverance

might be opened. Then remounting his horse, he threw the reins upon its neck, and the animal left to itself, or rather to the care of Almighty Providence, threaded all the mazes of the wood, and made straight into the high road.

In the year 1652, after eleven years of close attention to his studies as a minister, he tendered his resignation to the presbytery. At first it was declined, but the year following they were induced to accept it, and on February 3, 1653, his ministerial connection with Newbottle was dissolved. Shortly after he was chosen Principal of the University of Edinburgh. In this situation Leighton was eminently useful. He revived the practice of delivering, once in the week, a Latin lecture on some theological subject:—these lectures attracted great attention, and the public hall was thronged with auditors, who were delighted with the purity of his style, and with his animated delivery, as well as with the matter of his discourses.\* To the students under his care he was indefatigably attentive, instructing them singly as well as collectively; and to many youths of capacity and distinction his wise and affectionate exhortations were permanently beneficial. In this office he remained for nearly ten

\* These Lectures have been translated into English.

years, the ornament and delight of the University, and a blessing to studious youth.

Of his proceedings, while he held this academical post, some particulars are extant, which bespeak him gifted with talents for active business. Two years after his appointment, he was deputed by the Provost and Council, to apply to the Protector in London, for an augmentation of the revenues of the college. A minute of the town council register indicates that his mission was successful.

The year following, he called the attention of the magistrates to a report of some suspicious houses having been detected in the neighborhood of the college, and effectual measures were set on foot, at his suggestion, for extirpating the nuisance.

Neither was he regardless of those subordinate establishments, to which, as they were not comprehended within the immediate circle of his duties, a principal of austerer dignity, or of inferior zeal, might not have condescended. Observing that the collegians made little way in the higher branches of science and literature, he searched into the cause of their deficiency, and quickly found it in the want of a sound rudimental education. For the cure of this evil he proposed that grammar-schools should be founded and suitably endowed.

In the same year he offered to preach in the col-

lege hall to the scholars, once on the Sabbath of every third or fourth week, taking turns with the professors ; an offer which appears to have been accepted by the town Council.

---

## CHAPTER II.

WHILE BISHOP OF DUNBLANE, SCOTLAND, AND ARCHBISHOP OF  
GLASGOW.

THE course of our narrative has now brought us to the period when Leighton was called to the episcopal office. Charles II. had determined to introduce episcopacy into Scotland, though this measure was opposed to the views and feelings of the great body of the people.

Dr. Leighton, whose views of episcopacy itself were extremely moderate, and who had no idea that the establishment of it in Scotland would produce such effects as followed, had gone to Bath for his health. He courted no preferment, and seems to have indulged no wish for any dignity in the church. Being invited to London, or going thither to visit his brother and friends, the acceptance of a see in Scotland was urged upon him both by the Court and his own connections. His character for learning,

piety, moderation, and candor, it was thought, would greatly promote the new scheme. It is probable, likewise, that the hope of accommodating differences between the opposite parties, or, at least, of softening their mutual animosity, induced the doctor to be overcome by repeated solicitations. One circumstance, scarcely noticed by some of his biographers, appears to have had no small weight in determining his mind. His brother, Sir Elisha, who was a courtier and ambitious of preferment, gained his confidence by strong professions of piety, and expected to oblige the king by procuring the doctor's acquiescence, and to rise at court through his advancement.

Perhaps this transaction, which has been thought to cast a shade over his constancy and disinterestedness, may appear to the candid and intelligent reasoner, when thoroughly sifted, to exhibit those qualities with singular lustre. Taking in the whole system of his life before and after his consecration, we see him an example of modesty, gravity, and habitual recollection of spirit; a despiser of riches, and show, and figure, and selfish indulgences; an exile in heart from this world of sensible objects; one, whose prime delight it was to dwell in solitary converse with God, and with the things that are invisible and eternal.



The following letter, which Leighton addressed to the Rev. James Aird, of Torry, will show the conflict which he endured at this period.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I have received from you the kindest letter that ever you wrote me, and that you may know I take it so, I return you the free and friendly advice, never to judge any man before you hear him, nor any business by one side of it. Were you here to see the other, I am confident your thoughts and mine would be the same. You have both too much knowledge of me, and too much charity, to think that either such little contemptible scraps of honor or riches sought in that part of the world with so much reproach, or any human complacency in the world, will be admitted to decide so grave a question, or that I should sell (to speak no higher) the very sensual pleasure of my retirement for a rattle, far less deliberately do anything that I judge offends God. For the offence of good people in cases indifferent in themselves, but not accounted so by them, whatsoever you do or do not, you shall offend some good people on the one side or other; and for those with you, the great fallacy in this business is, that they have misreckoned themselves in taking

my silence and their zeal to have been consent and participation ; which, how great a mistake it is, few know better or so well as yourself. And the truth is, I did see approaching an inevitable necessity to strain with them in divers practices, in what station soever remaining in Britain ; and to have escaped further off (which hath been in my thoughts) would have been the greatest scandal of all. And what will you say, if there be in this thing somewhat of that you mention, and would allow of reconciling the devout on different sides, and of enlarging those good souls you meet with from their little fears, though possibly with little success ? Yet the design is commendable, pardonable at least. However, one comfort I have, that in what is pressed on me there is the least of my own choice, yea, on the contrary, the strongest aversion that ever I had to anything in my life : the difficulty, in short, lies in a necessity of either owning a scruple which I have not, or the rudest disobedience to authority that may be. The truth is, I am yet importuning and struggling for a liberation, and look upward for it ; but, whatsoever be the issue, I look beyond it in this weary, weary, wretched life, through which the hand I have resigned it to, I trust, will lead me in the path of his own choosing ; and, so that I may

please him, I am satisfied. I hope, if ever we meet, you will find me, in the love of solitude and a devout life,

“Your unaltered brother and friend, R. L.”

“When I set pen to paper, I intended not to exceed half a dozen lines, but slid on insensibly thus far ; but though I should fill the paper on all sides, still the right view of this business would be necessarily suspended till our meeting. Meanwhile, hope well of me, and pray for me. This word I will add, that, as there has been nothing of my choice in the thing, so, I undergo it, if it must be, as a mortification, and that greater than a cell and hair-cloth ; and whether any will believe this, I am not careful.”

Leighton was very averse to his own promotion ; his nephew's account states, that he was only overcome by a peremptory order of the Court, requiring him to accept it, unless he thought in his conscience that the episcopal office was unlawful. Unable to screen himself behind this opinion, which he was far from entertaining, he surrendered at length to the royal will, that he might not incur the guilt of contumacy toward the king, or of shrinking from a service to which a greater Potentate seemed to summon him.

Leighton felt extremely anxious to reconcile the jarring parties in his own country ; and to obtain so desirable an object, he consented to expose himself to great personal sacrifices. Had it been possible for human virtue to have prevented the bloody discord which shortly overcast the spiritual firmament, and rent the Scottish church like an earthquake, Leighton could not have failed. He soon found that he was placed in unpleasant circumstances ; for on any point which seemed to touch the substance of Christian piety, he was exquisitely sensible. Hence his disgust at the feasting and jollity with which the consecration of the new bishops was celebrated. It grieved this good man to see anything of sensual levity mixed up with the solemn business to which they were set apart ; and the absence of that seriousness, and spirit of prayer, which became the commencement of such an undertaking as the new-modelling of a church, oppressed his mind with gloomy presages. These were increased when he found Archbishop Sharp unprepared with any plan for healing the wounds of the church, for purging out its corruptions, for rectifying its disorders, and for kindling in it a livelier flame of true piety. On these great objects Leighton was anxious to begin without delay—he already had conceived a process for the union of parties in

Scotland, and for reforming the public services of religion, and reducing them to a method more orderly and better adapted for general edification. But in these Christian projects he found no auxiliary. Archbishop Sharp appears to have been neither able to understand the spirit, nor disposed to forward the schemes, of Leighton, to whose pious disinterestedness the apparent worldliness of his colleagues formed a striking contrast. Leighton's sad forebodings were not a little confirmed, by the clear development that was daily taking place of the principles by which Archbishop Sharp was actuated. He remarked to Burnet, "In the whole progress of that affair there appeared such cross characters of an angry Providence, that how fully soever he was satisfied in his own mind as to episcopacy itself, yet it seemed that God was against them, and that they were not like to be the men that should build up his church ; so that the struggling about it seemed to him like fighting against God."

On the 12th of December, 1661, four of the persons selected as bishops for Scotland received consecration in London. Leighton, at his special request, was appointed to the inconsiderable see of Dunblane, in Perthshire. Early in the following year, the new bishops proceeded in one coach to

Edinburgh. Between Leighton and his colleagues, however, there was such a want of sympathy, as made it very irksome to him to journey in their company ; and having learned that it was their intention to make a grand entry into Edinburgh, he quitted them at Morpeth, and arrived some days before the rest of the party. Burnet describes him to have been a downcast spectator of the pomp and parade with which the other three bishops were escorted into the Scottish metropolis ; and the spirit of wise and pious men was abashed, when they contrasted this ostentatious pageantry with the example of the true Bishop of souls.

In his fixed aversion to worldly honors, Leighton besought his friends not to give him the appellation of Lord, and was uneasy at ever being addressed by that title. By this singularity he gave umbrage to his colleagues, and laid himself open to the charge of an affectation, proceeding from a narrow-minded squeamishness, if not from a refinement of vanity : or, indeed, this solicitude to divest his office of its usual dignities, might be ill-naturedly ascribed to his not being thoroughly satisfied with the function itself, and seeking to compound with his conscience by a sacrifice of external distinction.

Shortly after their arrival in Edinburgh, the bishops were formally invited to take their seats in

Parliament ; not that any invitation was requisite to authorise their attendance, but it was deemed a proper token of respect. By all, except the Bishop of Dunblane, the call was obeyed. He resolved from the beginning never to mix in Parliament, unless some matter affecting the interests of religion were in agitation ; and to this resolution he steadily adhered. His efforts to promote union were thwarted by party spirit : he therefore sought the privacy in which he delighted, in the diocess of Dunblane, which he had chosen as the least lucrative.

It was in April, 1662, that Bishop Leighton entered the seat of his diocess, and there he labored most assiduously. He thought, with St. Augustine, that a bishopric is not intended for pastime and amusement : “ *Episcopatus non est artificium transigendæ vitæ.*” He therefore resided constantly on his see, and his holy ministrations watered the places about him with a blessing. Not content to repose in a lazy state, he regarded himself as a shepherd of souls, and went about from parish to parish, catechizing and preaching. But his primary aim was to heal the fountains ; for he justly considered that if ministers were to become sound in doctrine, exemplary in personal conduct, and sedulous in pastoral duties, the fruits of their spirituality and zeal would quickly appear in the amended state of

their parishes. He preached every Lord's day ; consoled the sick and afflicted, instructed the ignorant, and gave liberally to the poor. When any of the churches were vacant, he frequently supplied them himself ; and visited all of them once a year. The majority of his clergy were both illiterate and careless ; but his timidity, and hope of their amendment by his own instruction and example, prevented him from deposing them ;—a sentence which he would also have found it difficult to execute, against the influence of their friends, and the temper of the other bishops. His deep concern that they might be wise and good, is evident from various charges which he gave them ; and particularly from the first, delivered September, 1662, which has been published, and breathes a spirit of piety and peace. Among other excellent directions in that charge, the bishop urges the necessity of personal holiness and of a peaceable temper. He said, “ that it was to be remembered, both by them and himself, to what eminent degrees of purity of heart and life their holy calling doth engage them ; to how great contempt of this present world, and inflamed affections toward heaven, springing from deep persuasion within them of those things they preach to others, and from the daily meditation on them, and fervent prayer ;” and that we consider how ill it becomes us



to be much in the trivial conversation of the world ; but, when our duty or necessity leads us into company, that our speech and deportment be exemplarily holy ; that we be meek and gentle, endeavoring rather to quench than to increase the useless debates and contentions that abound in the world ; and be always more studious of pacific than polemic divinity : the students of the former are called the sons of God.”

At this time persecution raged in the southern and western parts of Scotland ; but not one individual within the diocess of Dunblane, during Leighton’s occupation of that see, was violently molested for his religious principles : an exception which must be ascribed, in a great degree, to the mild temper and active influence of the bishop. To the Presbyterian ministers, particularly in his own diocess, he was always lenient. He held several conferences with them for the purpose of accommodation, and occasionally heard them preach.

It would be difficult to do justice to the sense Leighton entertained of the great responsibility of Christian ministers. For himself, (as his practice bears witness,) he always desired the smallest cure ; partly from his humility, and partly from an apprehension, so lively as to be almost terrible, of the account which must be given in by spiritual over-

seers at the great tribunal. Often would he commiserate those of the London clergy, the extent of whose cures made it impracticable to pay to each individual of their flock the attention that his soul required. "Were I again" he said in his last retirement, "to be a parish minister, I must follow sinners to their houses, and even to their ale-houses." As one of the faults imputed to the Episcopal clergy was unskilfulness in preaching, he was solicitous to remove from his own diocese all color for this allegation. This he knew could never be effected until the pulpits were filled by holy men. "It is vain," he would say, "for any one to speak of divine things without something of divine affections. An ungodly clergyman must feel weary when preaching godliness, and will hardly preach it persuasively. He has not been able to prevail on himself to be holy, and no marvel if he fail of prevailing upon others. In truth, he is in great danger of becoming hardened against religion by the frequent inculcation of it, if it fail of melting him."

The following extract from a letter, in which he offers a living to one of his clergy, affords a beautiful specimen of Christian politeness, at the same time that it lets us into the bishop's sense of the temper and affection with which a charge of souls should be undertaken.

“SIR,

“There is one place indeed in my precinct now vacant, and yet undisposed of, by the voluntary removal of the young man who was in it to a better benifice; and this is likewise in my hand, but it is of so wretchedly mean provision that I am ashamed to name it—little, I think, above five hundred marks (less than £30 sterling) a year. If the many instances of that kind you have read, have made you in love with *voluntary poverty*, there you may have it; but wheresoever you are or shall be for the little rest of your time, I hope you are, and still will be, daily advancing in the blest poverty of spirit that is the only true height and greatness of spirit in all the world entitling to a crown: ‘for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ Oh! what are all the scraps that the great ones of this world are scrambling for, compared with that pretension? I pray you, as you find an opportunity, though possibly little or no inclination to it, yet bestow one line or two upon

“Your poor friend and servant,

“R. L.”

The following letter to the heritors\* of the parish of Stratton, places in a clear light the upright, yet

\* The heritors of a parish are the *owners* of the real property (lands, houses, etc.) within it.

sagacious policy, by which Leighton managed to fill the vacant benefices with pious men, and to conciliate the good-will of the parishioners to their new pastors.

“WORTHY GENTLEMEN AND FRIENDS,

“Being informed that it is my duty to present a person fit for the charge of the ministry now vacant with you, I have thought of one whose integrity and piety I am so fully persuaded of, that I dare confidently recommend him to you as one who, if the hand of God do bind that work upon him amongst you, is likely, through the blessing of the same hand, to be very serviceable to the building up of your souls heavenward ; but is as far from suffering himself to be obtruded, as I am from obtruding any upon you : so that unless you invite him to preach, and, after hearing him, declare your consent and desire toward his embracing of the call, you may be secure from the trouble of hearing any further concerning him, either from himself or me ; and if you please to let me know your mind, your reasonable satisfaction shall be, to my utmost power, endeavored by

“Your affectionate friend, R. L.”

In the charges which this venerable prelate de-

livered to his clergy, they were directed to read portions of the Old and New Testaments, as an important part of the service. It was also his wish that the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the Doxology, should be restored to more frequent use ; that a weekly day should be appointed for catechizing, and that an easy compendium of Christian doctrine should be agreed upon by his clergy, to be made the basis of catechetical instructions to the young and the ignorant. Probably the short catechism, which is among his printed works, was composed for this purpose. The sermons of that period generally ran in a high strain of controversy. Against this the bishop set his face, and he labored to bring into the place of subtle and passionate disputations a modest and sober style of preaching, that should be level to the capacities, and calculated to amend the morals of the community. On the ignorance and viciousness of the people in general he touches sorrowfully, and he warns his clergy against slackness and timidity in reproofing the prevalent sins of their respective parishes. Large portions of Holy Scripture were preferred by him as subjects for sermons to single texts, for he thought they offered more scope for pithy practical remark, and were better calculated to lay hold on the attention of the auditory.

Though friendly to a grave and masculine eloquence, of which he was himself no common master, yet his chief desire was that discourses from the pulpit should be simple and clear. After hearing a plain, homely sermon, he expressed the highest satisfaction; "for the good man," said he in reference to the preacher, "seems in earnest to catch souls." "The measure of speech," he remarked, (and it is an observation well worthy of being preserved,) "ought to be the character of the audience, which is made up, for the most part, of illiterate persons."

Any deliberate opinion of this great man must deserve respect, even when it may not command acquiescence. It would, therefore, be wrong to omit mentioning, that he disliked the practice of reading sermons; being of opinion that it detracted much from the weight and authority of preaching. "I know (he said) that weakness of the memory is pleaded in excuse for this custom; but better minds would make better memories. Such an excuse is unworthy of a man, and much more of a father, who may want vent indeed in addressing his children, but ought never to want matter. Like Elihu, he should be refreshed by speaking."

Although disposed to lenity, he was not regardless of discipline. Gross offences committed in his

diocess were to be branded with church censures ; and the restoration of offenders to the communion of the church was to be delayed till indubious symptoms of repentance had shown themselves.

It was among his pious plans to bring about a more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, which in those days was not in every place so much as an annual ceremony : he wished the people to be carefully instructed in the spiritual import of this holy rite, and to be frequently exhorted to maintain a constant fitness for it. He also made it incumbent on his clergy to promote the practice of family worship, and to exercise a watchful superintendence over their flocks, bearing the spiritual burdens of every member, and dealing out to each, as his case may require, instruction, or counsel, or reproof, or consolation.

It has been already stated how careful he was to remind his clergy that no substantial good could be expected from their ministrations, unless they were themselves remarkable for sanctity of heart and life ; men of prayer, of study, and meditation ; of "great contempt of this present world, and inflamed affections toward heaven ;" whose pure and peaceable demeanor, full of mercy and good fruits, should stamp them for the sons of God, and servants of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Having these things much at heart, he gave in a paper at the synod of 1667, in which, after a most conciliatory introduction, and blaming himself for having, through averseness to lord it over Christ's heritage, been more backward to advise them than perhaps his situation demanded, he proceeds to urge the importance of adding life and efficacy to those "privy trials," in which the presbyters used to examine each other for mutual correction and edification. This process, he is satisfied, might be made exceedingly salutary to those who were declining in zeal and diligence, were entangled in doctrinal errors, or were in any way swerving from the path of ministerial duty; provided they were so conducted as to constrain a man to serious reflection upon himself; and with a view to their being rendered thus useful, he lays down some admirable rules, which are included in the body of his works.

This holy man was as remote as possible from an imperious and domineering exercise of his authority. Instead of exacting submission from his clergy by peremptoriness and menaces, he industriously waved his authority as a bishop, and bespoke their obedience by urbanity and gentleness. The only superiority he sought was in labor; the only ascendancy he coveted was in self-denial and holiness;



and in these respects he had few competitors for preëminence.

Proceeding steadily upon these principles, and exerting all his influence to impart to others the same fervency of spirit, he drew upon himself the eyes of all Scotland, which gazed with amazement at his bright and singular virtues, as at a star of unrivalled brilliance newly added to the sky.

But the violent efforts which were employed to promote the plans of King Charles II. in Scotland, led to much discontent and numerous evils. Leighton's spirit was deeply grieved in witnessing the commotions of his country. He would say, "I have met with many cunning plotters, but with few honest and skilful undertakers. Many have I seen who were wise and great as to this world; but of such as were willing to be weak that others may be strong, and whose only aim it is to promote the prosperity of Zion, I have not found one in ten thousand."

Having made these afflicting discoveries, and finding all his efforts to put things in a better train quite ineffectual, Leighton thought that he should be justified in laying down the charge which he had taken up, not as a dignity, but as a cross and a burden. He resolved, however, to go up to London in the first instance, and to lay before the royal eye, which

had hitherto been deluded with fallacious representations, a faithful picture of the distempered and convulsed state of Scotland. Having obtained an interview with the king, he declared that the severities practised upon objectors to the new establishment were such as his conscience could not justify, even for the sake of planting Christianity in a heathen land; and much less could he agree to them for an end so comparatively insignificant as that of substituting one form of ecclesiastical government for another. He therefore besought permission to resign his bishopric, lest by retaining it he should seem to be a party to violences at which his principles and feelings revolted. His majesty professed disapprobation of the manner in which the affairs of the church were administered by Sharp, and seemed touched by the pathetic arguments of the virtuous advocate of toleration. He pledged himself to stop that application of the secular sword against which Leighton protested, and he actually annulled the ecclesiastical commission which endeavored to goad dissenters into conformity by fines, and jails, and corporal punishments. But he would not hear of Leighton's vacating his see; and the bishop consented at length to retain it, as he could not be ignorant that, by persisting in his purpose of retirement, he would throw away every chance of

holding the king to those engagements into which he had just been impelled.

Leighton had so fully made up his mind to withdraw at this time from his station, that he had taken a solemn farewell of his clergy before his departure for London. After winding up the regular business of the synod, in October, 1665, he informed them that there was a matter, of which he thought it his duty to notify them. He then announced his intention of retiring; and the reasons he assigned for it were, the sense he entertained of his own unworthiness to sustain so high an office, and his weariness of those contentions which had clothed the household of God in mourning, and seemed to be rather increasing than abating. "For myself," he said, "brethren, I have to thank you for the undeserved respect and kindness which I have all along experienced at your hands. Let me entreat your good construction of the poor endeavors I have used to serve you, and to assist you in promoting the work of the ministry, and the great designs of the Gospel. If in anything, whether by word or deed, I have given you offence, or unnecessarily pained a single individual among you, I do earnestly and humbly crave forgiveness. My last advice to you is, that you continue in the study of peace and holiness, and grow and abound in love to our great Lord and Master, and to the

souls for which he died. Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of peace and love shall be with you. Amen.”

In the year 1667, Leighton was again forced from his beloved retirement, to plead the cause of an oppressed and injured people. He went to London a second time, and remonstrated earnestly with the king against the oppressive measures still pursued. He had two audiences with King Charles, and represented, in strong but respectful language, the injustice and cruelty with which affairs were administered in Scotland. It was then that the good bishop took the liberty of proposing to the king, and even urging, that the Presbyterians should be treated with moderation and lenity. King Charles, as usual, gave him fair speeches and promises; but nothing effectual was done. Leighton returned to his diocese with a heavy heart, and labored in word and doctrine, preaching and catechizing throughout his diocese:—a burning and a shining light, in the midst of discord and contention, violence and war, all around. Meanwhile, his peaceful endeavors to soften the opposite parties were unremitting, but without success.

In the year 1670, without his solicitation, and against his will, he was appointed to the archbish-

opric of Glasgow ; though he did not take possession of that see for twelve months after the appointment. He was strongly urged by the ruling men to accept of it, yet hesitated long. They knew that he was the only man qualified to allay the discontents which prevailed in the west of Scotland ; and even the king ordered him to come up to court, for the purpose of overcoming his scruples. Knowing that Leighton had formed a scheme of accommodation between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, which was for years the object of his desires and the subject of his study, Charles examined it, expressed his approbation, and promised assistance in carrying it into effect. This was the motive which induced him to accept of the archbishopric of Glasgow. The scheme itself was marked by moderation. Leighton wished each of the parties, for the sake of peace, to abate somewhat of their opinions respectively, as to the mode of government and worship : nor did he conceive that truth would suffer by their union, but rather that the great ends of Christianity would be promoted. But various things rendered the scheme abortive. Both parties were too much exasperated, and too jealous of each other, to yield a single point. There is sufficient ground likewise to think that the king sent secret instructions to counteract the whole of Leighton's plan. In short, though the scheme

did much honor to his liberal and pacific heart, it came to nothing. The Archbishop of Glasgow, however, did all in his power to reform the clergy, to correct wickedness and promote piety among the people, to suppress violence, and to soothe the minds of the Presbyterians. At Glasgow, Paisley, and Edinburgh, he held conferences with them on their principles, and on his scheme of accommodation, but without effect. The parties could not be brought to mutual indulgence, and far less to religious concord. The experience of Episcopacy, during the two preceding reigns, was calculated to create disgust and aversion. It had been introduced, and was still continued, by military force. Besides, the Presbyterians knew that Leighton was the only bishop, and almost the only man, in church or in state, who was cordial and zealous in making the proposal.

Leighton preached to the clergy of Glasgow, and in several discourses, both in public and private, he exhorted them to look up more to God, to consider themselves as the ministers of the cross of Christ, to bear the contempt and ill-usage they met with, as a cross laid on them for the exercise of their faith and patience, to lay aside all the appetites of revenge, to humble themselves before God, to have many days for secret fasting and prayer, and to meet

often together that they might quicken and assist one another in those holy exercises, and then they might expect blessings from heaven upon their labors.

Leighton made various attempts at reconciliation ; but, undermined and opposed by his own party for his blameless life and lenient principles and temper, and suspected by some of the other party through his gentleness, he felt his situation to be irksome and intolerable. Burdened above measure, he looked back to Dunblane with fond regret, and did not cease affectionately and solemnly to admonish the clergy of that diocess ; as appears from the following letter to the synod of Dunblane.

“ GLASGOW, April 6, 1671.

“ REVEREND BRETHREN,

“ The superadded burden that I have here, sits so heavy upon me, that I cannot escape from under it, to be with you at this time ; but my heart and desires shall be with you, for a blessing from above upon your meeting. I have nothing to recommend to you, but (if you please) to take a review of things formerly agreed upon, and such as you judge most useful ; to renew the appointment of putting them in practice ; and to add whatsoever further shall occur to your thoughts, that may promote the happy discharge of your ministry, and the good of your peo-

ple's souls. I know I need not remind you, for I am confident you daily think of it, that the great principle of fidelity and diligence, and good success, in that great work, is love ; and the great spring of love to souls, is to love Him that bought them. He knew it well himself, and gave us to know it, when he said, *Simon, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.* Deep impression of his blessed name upon our hearts, will not fail to produce lively expression of it, not only in our words and discourses, in private and public, but will make the whole track of our lives to be a true copy and transcript of his holy life : and, if there be within us any sparks of that divine love, you know the best way not only to preserve them, but to excite them and blow them up into a flame, is by the breath of prayer. Oh prayer ! the converse of the soul with God, the breath of God in man returning to its original ; frequent, and fervent prayer, the better half of our whole work, and that which makes the other half lively and effectual : as that holy company tells us, when, appointing deacons to serve the tables, they add, *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.* And is it not, brethren, our unspeakable advantage, beyond all the gainful and honorable employments of the world, that the whole work of our particular calling is a kind of living in heaven ; and besides



its tendency to the saving of the souls of others, is all along so proper and adapted to the purifying and saving of our own? But you will possibly say, What does he himself do that speaks these things unto us? Alas! I am ashamed to tell you. All I dare say is this: I think I see the beauty of holiness, and am enamored with it, though I attain it not; and how little soever I attain, would rather live and die in the pursuit of it, than in the pursuit, yea, or in the possession and enjoyment, though unpursued, of all the advantages that this world affords. And I trust, dear brethren, you are of the same opinion, and have the same desire and design, and follow it both more diligently, and with better success. But I will stop here, lest I should forget myself, and possibly run on till I have wearied you, if I have not done that already; and yet if it be so, I will hope for easy pardon at your hands, as of a fault I have not been accustomed to heretofore, nor am likely hereafter often to commit. To the all-powerful grace of our great Lord and Master, I recommend you, and your flocks, and your whole work amongst them; and do earnestly entreat your prayers for

“Your unworthiest, but most affectionate,

“Brother and servant,

“R. LEIGHTON.”

At length, when Leighton found that all his efforts to unite the different parties were vain, he determined to resign. All these crosses and disappointments were regarded by him, as so many providential intimations to relinquish an employment, wherein he seemed to be doing little service to the church, while sacrificing his personal comfort. Anguish was drinking up his spirit, without benefit to the cause of religion. Accordingly, he rigorously canvassed the legality of abdicating his office : he found out several instances of bishops who had taken that step, and gone into retirement ; and at length he fully satisfied himself that the law of God did not require him to retain his bishopric, when the business of it was but to consume its revenues in stately indolence. On scrutinizing his own heart, he could not perceive that he was prompted to this measure by successive disgusts, by impatience of the cross, by wounded pride, by secret indignation at Providence, or by his natural propensity to a quiet, studious, and contemplative privacy. Was it not a duty, rather than a fault, to renounce a position of anxious dignity, and barren of usefulness, for one more favorable to prayer and meditation, to communion with God, and to preparation for eternity ? He was now growing old and infirm, and had need to respire from over-

whelming fatigues. He considered that the dressing and undressing of his soul, as he used to call devotional exercises, was the business to which his few remaining days ought to be consecrated, and he "longed to escape, if only into the air among the birds," from the ungrateful service which he had not declined when summoned to it by a sense of duty ; but from which he held himself discharged, now that it was become evident that no good could issue from his remaining in it.

We can hardly doubt that Leighton had been long looking out for the moment, when he might indulge, without violence to his conscience, his disposition to seclusion from the world.

The following extract of a letter to his sister, Mrs. Lightmaker, shows the state of his feelings : " Our joint business is to die daily to this world and self, that what little remains of our life, we may live to Him that died for us. For myself, to what purpose is it that I tell you that I grow old and sickly ; and though I have here great retirement, yet I am still panting after a retreat from this place and all public charge, and next to rest in the grave. It is the most pressing desire I have of anything in the world ; and, if it might be, near you. But our heavenly Father, we quietly resigning all to Him, both knows and will do what is best."

This letter is dated from Dunblane, where he seems mostly to have resided, after his efforts for accommodation came to nothing. In this retreat, to which he was very partial, there is said to be still in existence a shady avenue, called "The Bishop's Walk;" a name which it took from the practice of the venerable Leighton to pace up and down it, when he wished to join bodily exercise with spiritual meditation.

In April, 1673, he addressed the following letter to the Synod of Glasgow, which he met for the last time on the eighth day of the following December.

"REVEREND BRETHREN,

"It is neither a matter of much importance, nor can I yet give you a particular and satisfying account of the reasons of my absence from your meeting, which I trust, with the help of a little time, will clear itself; but I can assure you, I am at present with you in my most affectionate wishes of the gracious presence of that Holy Spirit amongst you and within you all, who alone can make this and all your meetings, and the whole work of your ministry, happy and successful to the good of souls, and his glory that bought them with his own blood. And I doubt not that your own great desire, each for himself, and all for one another, is the same;

and that your daily and great employment is, by incessant and fervent prayer, to draw down from above large supplies and increase of that blessed Spirit, which our Lord and Master hath assured us that our heavenly Father will not fail to give to them that ask it. And how extreme a negligence and folly were it to want so rich a gift for want of asking ; especially in those devoted to so high and holy a service, that requires so great degrees of that spirit of holiness and Divine love to purify their minds, and to raise them above their senses and this present world ! Oh, my dear brethren ! what are we doing, that suffer our souls to creep and grovel on this earth, and do so little aspire to the heavenly life of Christians, and more eminently of the messengers and ministers of God, as stars, yea, as angels, which he hath made spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire ! Oh ! where are souls to be found among us that represent their own original, that are possessed with pure and sublime apprehensions of God, the Father of spirits, and are often raised to the astonishing contemplation of his eternal and blessed being, and his infinite holiness, and greatness, and goodness, and are accordingly burnt up with ardent love ! And where that holy fire is wanting there can be no sacrifice, whatsoever our invention, or utterance, or gifts may be, and how

blameless soever the externals of our life may be, and even our hearts free from gross pollutions ; for it is scarcely to be suspected that any of us will suffer any of those strange, yea, infernal fires of ambition, or avarice, or malice, or impure lusts, or sensualities, to burn within us, which would render us priests of idols, of airy nothings, and of dunghill gods—yea, of the very god of this world, the prince of darkness. Let men judge us and revile us as they please, that imports nothing at all ; but God forbid anything should possess our hearts but He that loved us, and gave himself for us ; for we know we cannot be vessels of honor meet for the master's use, unless we purge ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and empty ourselves of all things beside him, and even of ourselves, and of our own will, and have no more any desires nor delights but his will alone, and his glory, who is our peace, and our life, and our all. And truly I think it were our best and wisest reflection upon the many difficulties and discouragements without us, to be driven by them to live more within, as they observe of the bees ; that when it is foul weather abroad they are busy in their hives. If the power of external discipline be enervated in our hands, yet who can forbid us to try and judge, and censure ourselves, and to purge the inner temples, our

own hearts, with the more severity and exactness. And if we be dashed and bespattered with reproaches abroad, to study to be the cleaner at home ; and the less we find of meekness and charity in the world about us, to preserve so much the more of that sweet temper within our own hearts, blessing them that curse us, and praying for them that persecute us ; so shall we most effectually prove ourselves to be the children of our heavenly Father, even to their conviction that will scarcely allow us in any sense to be called his servants.

“ As for the confusions and contentions that still abound and increase in the church, and threaten to undo it, I think our wisdom will be to cease from man, and look for no help till we look more upward ; and dispute and discourse less, and fast and pray more, and so draw down our relief from the God of order and peace, who made the heavens and the earth.

“ Concerning myself I have nothing to say, but humbly to entreat you to pass by the many failings and weaknesses you may have perceived in me during my abode with you ; and if in anything I have injured or offended you, or any of you, in the management of my public charge, or in private converse, I do sincerely beg your pardon ; though I cannot make any requital in that kind, for I do

not know of anything toward me from any of you that needs a pardon in the least, you having generally paid me more kindness and respect than a much better or wiser man could either have expected or deserved. Nor am I only a suitor for your pardon, but for the addition of a further charity, and that so great a one that I have nothing to plead for it but that I need it much—your prayers. And I am hopeful, as to that, to make you some little, though very disproportionate, return; for whatsoever becomes of me, (through the help of God,) while I live you shall be no one day of my life forgotten by

“Your most unworthy, but most affectionate,

“Brother and servant,

“R. LEIGHTON.”

“P. S. I do not see whom it can offend, or how any can disapprove of it, if you will appoint a fast throughout your bounds, and entreat a blessing on the seed committed to the ground, and for the other grave causes that are still the same as they were the last year, and the urgency of them no whit abated, but rather increased; but in this I prescribe nothing, but leave it to your discretion and the direction of God.”

In the summer of 1673, the archbishop again went to London, to proffer his resignation to the



king. The king, however, still refused to accept it ; but gave a written engagement to allow him to retire after the trial of another year. The following is a copy of the king's engagement.

‘CHARLES R.

“It is our will and pleasure that the present Archbishop of Glasgow do continue in that station for one whole year ; and we shall allow liberty to him to retire from thence at the end of that time.

“Given at our Court, at Whitehall, the 9th day of August, 1673 ; and of our reign, the 25th year. By his Majesty's command.”

On this assurance Archbishop Leighton returned to Glasgow, and fulfilled the period of the engagement : it was a long year indeed to him. He often said that there was now only one painful stage between him and rest, and he would wrestle through it the best he could. His determination to resign was now firmly fixed, and when the period elapsed, he went to London and resigned his charge. The resignation was, according to promise, accepted, to the relief and joy of his heart.

The following are the reasons he assigned for resigning :

“Whatever others may judge, they that know

what passed before my engaging in this charge, will not, I believe, impute my retreat from it to levity or unfixedness of mind, considering how often I declared beforehand, both by word and writing, the great suspicions I had that my continuance in it would be very short ; neither is it from any sudden passion, or sullen discontent, that I have now resigned it, nor do I know any cause imaginable for any such thing ; but the true reasons of my retiring are plainly and briefly these.

I. The sense I have of the dreadful weight of whatsoever charge of souls, and all kind of spiritual inspection over all people, but much more over ministers ; and withal, of my own extreme unworthiness and unfitness for so high a station in the church ; and there is an episcopal act that is above all others formidable to me—the ordaining of ministers.

II. The continuing and daily increasing divisions and contentions, and many other disorders of this church, and the little or no appearance of their cure for our time ; and as little hope amidst these contentions and disorders of doing anything in this station to promote the great design of religion in the hearts and lives of men, which were the only reason of continuing in it, though it were with much pains and reluctance.

III. The earnest desire I have long had of a

retired and private life, which is now much increased by sickness and old age drawing on, and the sufficient experience I have of the folly and vanity of the world.

“To add any further discourse, a large apology in this matter, were to no purpose, but instead of removing other mistakes and misconstructions, would be apt to expose me to one more ; for it would look like too much valuing either of myself, or of the world’s opinion, both which I think I have too much reason to depise.”

---

### CHAPTER III.

FROM HIS RESIGNING THE CHARGE OF ARCHBISHOP TO HIS DEATH.  
HIS CHARACTER AND CORRESPONDENCE.

WE have already mentioned that Bishop Leighton’s sister was married to a gentleman of fortune and character, Edward Lightmaker, Esq., of Broadhurst, in Sussex. Mrs. Lightmaker was now a widow, and lived with her son, in the family mansion. Thither Leighton was invited to retire, and spend the remainder of his days. His sister’s spirit was congenial with his own ; and young Lightmaker was a most dutiful son and respectful nephew. Our author saw a retreat from care and trouble

provided for him by a kind Providence, and entered it with a grateful and disburdened soul.

Of the habits and employments of this man of God, during the sequel of his life, there remain but few particulars. Some interesting notices, however, of his general conversation, which are mostly gleaned from his nephew's letter to the Bishop of Salisbury, the pen of biography will not be employed amiss in recording.

We have seen that it was his purpose, in divorcing himself from the world, to give up the remnant of his days to secret and tranquil devotion. Having spent his prime in the active duties of his profession, and in the service of his fellow creatures, he saw no impropriety, but rather a suitableness, in consecrating his declining years more immediately to God ; and in making the last stage of earthly existence a season of unintermitted preparation for the scene, upon which he was to enter at the end of his journey. Accordingly, he lived in great seclusion ; and abstained, to the utmost that charity and courtesy would allow, from giving and receiving visits. Let it not be supposed, however, that he withdrew from ministerial employments. After disburdening himself of the episcopal dignity, he again took to the vocation of a parish minister, and was constantly engaged at Horsted Keynes, or one of the neighbor-

ing churches, in reading prayers or in preaching. In the peasant's cottage, likewise,

———"his tongue dropped manna:"

and long after his decease he was talked of by the poor of his village with affectionate reverence. With deep feeling would they recall his divine counsels and consolations ; his tenderness in private converse ; and the impressive sanctity which he carried into the solemnities of public worship.

Leighton was not by nature morose and ascetic ; yet something of a cloisteral complexion appears to have been wrought in him by the character of the times, and by the scarcity of men like-minded with himself. He plunged into the solitudes of devotion, with a view to escape from the polluting commerce of the world ; to gain the highest places of sacred contemplation, and to maintain perpetual intercourse with heaven.

"It is not" he would say, "the want of religious houses, but of spiritual hearts, that glues the wing of our affections, and hinders the more frequent practice of this leading precept of the divine law—fervently to lift up our souls unto God, and to have our conversation in heaven." His opinion was that a mixed life, or, as he beautifully termed it, an angelic life, was the most excellent—a life spent between ascending to fetch blessings from above,

and descending to scatter them among mortals. Would Christians retreat occasionally from the dizzy whirl and tumult of life, and give themselves time to think, they might become enamored of those beauties which lie above the natural ken on the summit of God's holy mountain. Some of the fathers of the first ages had, according to his notions, hit the happy medium ; and, by mingling pastoral ministrations with devotional retirement, had earned a better meed than is due to the votaries of a severe and unprofitable solitude.

After spending five years in this manner, without any remarkable interruption of his solitude, his fears were much alarmed by an unexpected and private letter from the king's own hand. It was written as follows.

WINDSOR, July 16, 1679.

“MY LORD—I am resolved to try what clemency can prevail upon such in Scotland as will not conform to the government of the church there ; for effecting which design I desire that you may go down to Scotland with your first conveniency, and take all possible pains for persuading all you can of both opinions to as much mutual correspondence and concord as can be ; and send me, from time to time, characters both of men and things. In order

to this design, I shall send a precept for two hundred pounds sterling upon my Exchequer, till you resolve how to serve me in a stated employment.

“Your loving friend,

“CHARLES R.”

Addressed thus,

“For the Bishop of Dunblane.”

It would appear, from this address, that Leighton, after resigning the dignity of Archbishop of Glasgow, resumed that of the Bishop of Dunblane. Or, perhaps, he simply retained the title, without the office. The matter referred to in the above letter being managed secretly between the king and Leighton, we know not how he got himself excused from complying with the royal order. But certain it is, that he never again visited Scotland, or intermeddled with ecclesiastical affairs. He continued in his beloved retirement about ten years, edifying all around him by occasional advice, and by his constant example, waiting for the time of his departure.

In the year 1684, Leighton was earnestly requested by Burnet to go up to London, and to visit Lord Perth, who had begun to feel compunction for his lamentable departure from the paths of virtue, and had expressed an earnest desire to have the benefit of Leighton's counsel. The hope of reclaiming

that unhappy nobleman prevailed over personal considerations, and he went up to London accordingly, healthy in appearance, but with feelings of illness, which may account for his presentiment that his dissolution was at hand. "The worse I am," said he, in the fulness of his self-denying benevolence, "the more I choose to go, that I may give one pull at your poor brother, and snatch him, if possible, from the infectious air of the court." Burnet had not seen him for a considerable time before, and was astonished at the freshness and vigor which appeared in him, notwithstanding his advanced age. His hair was still black, his motions were lively, and his devotion shone forth with the same lustre and vivacity as ever. On his friend's expressing great pleasure at seeing him look so hearty, Leighton observed that, for all that, he was very near his end, and his work and journey were now both almost done. This answer made little impression on Burnet at the time; but his mind reverted to it after the event of three more days had stamped it with a prophetic emphasis.

The very next day he was attacked with an oppression on the chest, and with cold, and stitches, which proved to be the commencement of a pleurisy. He sunk rapidly, for on the following day both speech and sense had left him; and after panting for



about twelve hours, he expired, without a struggle, in the arms of Bishop Burnet, his intimate friend—his ardent and affectionate admirer.

Nothing is recorded of his last hours ; and, indeed, the disease that carried him off was, in its nature and rapid progress, such as to preclude much speaking. But no record is necessary of the dying moments of a man who had served God from his youth, and whose path had been a shining light up to the moment when the shades of death closed over it. God was assuredly the strength of his heart in the hour of his last agony, and is now his glorious portion—his exceeding and eternal great reward.

It was needless for himself, that he should have notice of the bridegroom's coming ; for his lamp was always trimmed, and his loins were always girded. To his surviving friends it could have afforded little additional satisfaction, to have heard him express, on his death-bed, that faith and holy hope, of which his life had been one unbroken example : neither could he have left, for the benefit of posterity, any sayings more suitable to a dying believer than those he daily uttered ; living, as he had long lived, on the confines of the eternal world, and in the highest frame of spirituality that it seems possible for an imbodied soul to attain. He entered into his

rest, on the 25th of June, A. D. 1684, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

One remarkable circumstance accompanied the death of this great and good man. Though he had courted retirement all his life long, and had enjoyed it almost without interruption at Broadhurst for ten years, he was unexpectedly brought to London to see his esteemed friends once more, and to edify them by the closing scene. Leighton, too, as himself probably thought, received a strong hint in the course of Providence a short time before his death, that he must soon depart. As he never pressed the payment of his revenue, if it may be called by that name, considerable arrears were owing to him in Scotland. These were left in trust with a friend, who made small and slow remittances; and the very last remittance which could be expected, was sent a few weeks before our author's decease; "so that" (to adopt Bishop Burnet's happy phrase) "his provision and journey failed him both at once." But, the most remarkable circumstance of all was, that God granted a singular wish which Leighton often expressed. He was in the habit of expressing a desire, with submission to the will of Heaven, that he might die from home, and at an inn. He considered such a place as suitable to the character of the Christian pilgrim, to whom the world is an inn,

a place of accommodation by the way, not his home ; and that the spiritual sojourner steps with propriety from an inn to his Father's house. Leighton thought, also, that the care and concern of friends were apt to entangle and discompose the dying saint ; and that the unfeeling attendance of strangers weaned the heart from the world, and smoothed the passage to heaven. Our author obtained his wish ; for he died at the Bell inn, in Warwick Lane ; and none of his near relations were present during his last illness. If he had not the consolation to see his nearest relation, a beloved sister, yet the feelings of both were spared the agony of a final adieu.

His remains were conveyed to Horsted Keynes, the parish in which he had spent his concluding years, and were interred in an ancient chancel of the church. A simple epitaph marks his tomb.

The following are the testimonies of Bishop Burnett to the character of Leighton.

“I bear still a greater veneration for the memory of that man than I do for any other, and reckon my early knowledge of him, and my long and intimate conversation with him, that continued to his death, for twenty-three years, among the greatest blessings of my life, and for which I must give account to God in the great day in a most particular man-

ner." Again, he describes him as "a bishop that had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and most heavenly disposition that I ever yet saw in any mortal ; he had the greatest parts as well as virtues, with the perfectest humility that I ever saw in man, and had a sublime strain of preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty both of thought and of language, and of pronounciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye where he preached ; and I have seen whole assemblies often melt in tears before him ; and of him I can say, with great truth, that, in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two-and-twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word, or one that had not a direct tendency to edification ; and I never once saw him in any other temper but that which I would wish to be in in the last moments of my life. For that pattern which I saw in him, and for that conversation which I had with him, I know how much I have to answer to God ; and, though my reflecting on that which I knew in him gives me just cause of being humbled in myself and before God, yet I feel no more sensible pleasure in anything, than in going over in my thoughts all I saw and observed in him."

Having mentioned these circumstances of his removal, we may briefly describe the person of this

extraordinary man. Leighton was about the middle stature, well proportioned, and of a fair complexion. There was an admirable mixture of gravity and sweetness in his countenance ; his eyes beamed intelligence, sensibility, and benignity. He had a quickness in his motions, even in old age, which indicated the activity and energy of his mind. Contrary to the fashion of the times, he wore his own hair, which was black, and in advanced life retained the original color. Though he took little exercise, was a close student, extremely abstemious, and sometimes ailing ; on the whole, he enjoyed good health ; and, at the advanced period of three-score years and ten, looked well.

We shall now proceed to record some miscellaneous particulars, illustrative of the character and piety of Archbishop Leighton.

His character was eminently devotional ; prayer and praise were his business and his pleasure. His manner of praying was very earnest and importunate. To the Lord's prayer he was particularly partial, and he said of it, " Oh, the spirit of this prayer would make rare Christians." He considered prayer, fervent, frequent, intercessory prayer, to be a capital part of the clerical office ; and would repeat with great approbation that apophthegm of a pious bishop—" *Necesse est, non ut multum legamus,*

*sed ut multùm oremus.*” This he accounted the vessel, with which alone living water can be drawn from the well of Divine mysteries. Without it, he thought, the application of the greatest human powers to theology would turn out a laborious vanity ; and in support of this opinion he adduced the confession of Erasmus, that, when he began to approach the verities of celestial wisdom, he thought he understood them pretty well ; but after much study of commentators, he was infinitely more perplexed than before. With what a holy emphasis would Leighton exclaim, in commenting upon the words of David, “ Thou, O God, hast taught me.” Pointing to his books one day, he said to his nephew, “ One devout thought is worth them all ;” meaning, no doubt, that no accumulation of knowledge is comparable in value with internal holiness.

Of his delight in the inspired volume the amplest proof is afforded by his writings, which are a golden weft, thickly studded with precious stones from that mine, in beautiful arrangement. How would he lament that most people, instead of feeding upon scriptural truths, instead of ruminating on them leisurely, and prolonging the luxury as skilful epicures would do, rather swallowed them down whole like bitter pills, the taste of which is industriously disguised ! His French bible, now in the library

of Dunblane, is marked in numerous places ; and the blank leaves of it are filled with extracts made by his own pen from Jerome, Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, and several other fathers. But the Bible, which he had in daily use, gave yet stronger testimony to his intimate and delightful acquaintance with its contents. With the book of Psalms he was particularly conversant, and would sometimes style it, by an elegant application of a scriptural metaphor, " a bundle of myrrh, that ought to lie day and night in the bosom." Song of Solomon, 1 : 13. His nephew writes, there was scarce a line in that sacred Psalter that had passed without the stroke of his pencil.

The Sabbath was his day of delight ; and he would repair to God's house with a willing spirit, even when his body was infirm. One rainy Sabbath, when he was unwell, he persisted in attending church, and said, in excuse for his apparent rashness, " Were the weather fair, I would stay at home ; but since it is foul, I must go ; lest I be thought to countenance, by my example, the irreligious practice of letting trivial hindrances keep us back from public worship."

His religion was incorporated with the whole frame of his life and conversation. This gave a peculiarity, which was striking and impressive, to

many of his ordinary actions. They were the same things which other men did, but they were done in another manner, and bore the shining print of his angelic spirit.

So impressively was this the case that his nephew, when a little child, struck with his reverential manner of returning thanks after a meal, observed to his mother, that "his uncle did not give thanks like other folk."

It may be doubted whether Christianity, in the days of its youthful vigor, gave birth to a more finished pattern than Leighton of the love of holiness. It was truly his reigning passion; and his longing to depart hence grew out of an intense desire to be transformed into the Divine likeness. "To be content to stay always in this world," he observed, "is above the obedience of angels. Those holy spirits are employed according to the perfection of their natures, and restlessness in hymns of praise is their only rest." Often would he bewail the proneness of Christians to stop short of that perfection, the pursuit of which is enjoined upon us; and it was his grief to observe, that even good men are content to be "low and stunted vines." The wish nearest his heart was, to attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and all his singularities, for such to our reproach they are,



arose from this desire being in him so much more ardent than it is in ordinary Christians. In the subjoined letter, this habit of mind, this insatiable longing after perfect holiness, is finely portrayed. It was written when he was Principal of the University of Edinburgh.

“SIR,

“Oh! what a weariness is it to live amongst men, and find so few men; and among Christians, and find so few Christians; so much talk and so little action; religion turned almost to a tune and air of words; and amidst all our pretty discourses, pusillanimous and base and so easily dragged into the mire, self and flesh and pride and passion domineering, while we speak of being in Christ, and clothed with him, and believe it because we speak of it so often and so confidently. Well I know you are not willing to be thus gulled, and having some glimpses of the beauty of holiness, aim no lower than perfection, which is the end we hope to attain; and in the meanwhile the smallest advances toward it are more worth than crowns and sceptres. I believe you often think on those words of the blessed champion Paul, 1 Cor. 9 : 24, etc. There is a noble guest with us. Oh! let all our business be to entertain him honorably, and to live in celestial

love within ; *that* will make all things without be very contemptible in our eyes. I should rove on did not I stop myself, it falling out well too for that, to be hard upon the post hours ere I thought of writing. Therefore, good night is all I add ; for whatsoever hour it comes to your hand, I believe you are as sensible as I that it is still night ; but the comfort is, it draws nigh toward that bright morning that shall make amends.

“Your weary fellow pilgrim,           “R. L.”

To another person he writes :

“Thorns grow everywhere and from all things below, and to a soul transplanted out of itself into the root of Jesse, peace grows everywhere too, from Him who is called our peace, and whom we still find the more to be so, the more entirely we live in him, being dead to this world, and self, and all things beside him. Oh, when shall it be ? Well, let all the world go as it will, let this be our only pursuit and ambition, and to all other things *fiat voluntas tua, Domine*, ‘Lord, thy will be done!’ ”

Of the effectual eloquence of Leighton’s great example, a striking instance is adduced in Mr. Edward Lightmaker’s letter. The writer’s father, after witnessing the holy and mortified life of this

eminent saint, became sensible, that a man is in no safe condition for dying, unless he be striving after the highest degrees of piety. "If none shall go to heaven," he exclaimed, "but so holy a man as this, what will become of me?" Under these impressions, he very much withdrew from the world; relinquished a profitable business, because of its dangerous entanglements; and made the care of his ultimate felicity his chief occupation.

Such consequences might well be expected to flow from an intimacy with Leighton, for his discourse breathed the spirit of heaven. To no one, perhaps, do the exquisite lines of the Christian poet Cowper more accurately apply :

"When one, that holds communion with the skies,  
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,  
And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;  
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied."

The following extract breathes the spirit of a Christian hero :

"Courage, it shall be well ! We follow a conquering General ; yea, who hath conquered already ; *et qui semel vicit pro nobis, semper vincit in nobis*, 'He who hath once conquered for us, always conquers in us.' For myself at present, I am, (as we

used to say,) that is, this little contemptible lodge of mine, is not very well ; but that will pass some way or other, as it is best ; and even while the indisposition lasts, O ! how much doth it heighten the sweet relish of peace within, of which I cannot speak too highly. But methinks I find a growing contempt of all this world, and consequently some further degrees of that quiet which is only subject to disturbance by our inordinate fancies and desires, and receding from the blessed centre of our rest : *for hurries of the world, you know the way*, Isaiah 26 : 20, and in these retiring rooms we may meet, and be safe and quiet."

He seldom discoursed on secular matters without happily and naturally throwing in some spiritual reflections ; and it was his professed opinion, that nothing takes off more from the authority of ministers and the efficacy of their message, than a custom of vain and frivolous conversation. Indeed, he had brought himself into so composed a gravity, (writes his first biographer,) that I never saw him laugh, and but seldom smile ; and he kept himself in such a constant recollection that I do not remember that I ever heard him say one idle word. He seemed to be in a perpetual meditation. Although he was not at all given to sermonize, yet any little incident that fell under his observation would cause

some pious sentiment to drop from him, just as the slightest motion makes a brimful goblet run over. Meeting a blind beggar one day, he observed, "Me-thinks this poor sufferer cries out in behalf of the whole human race, as its representative, and let what he so earnestly craves be given him as readily as God bestows a cure on the spiritually blind who ask it." "It is extremely severe," said his sister, speaking to him of the season—"But thou, O God, hast made summer and winter," was his devout reply. Some one saying, "You have been to hear a sermon;" "I met a sermon," was his answer, "a sermon *de facto*, (in reality,) for I met a corpse, and rightly and profitably are the funeral rites observed when the living lay it to heart." Thus he endeavored to derive spiritual good out of every passing circumstance, and to communicate good to others.

In a soul so full of heaven, there was little room for earthly attachments: indeed, the whole tone of his discourse, and the constant tenor of his life, evinced his detachment not only from pomps and riches and delicacies, but from what are usually esteemed to be common comforts and necessities. To his judgment the middle condition of life best approved itself. "Better to be in the midst," were his words, "between the two pointed rocks of deep

penury and high prosperity, than to be on the sharps of either." But his choice, to quote his own emphatic expression, was TO CHOOSE NOTHING ; and he left it to a better wisdom than his own, to carve out his earthly lot. "If we are born to worldly riches, let us even take them, and endeavor to make friends with them who shall stand us in good stead when we are put out of our stewardship ; but to desire that our journey should be by the troublesome and dangerous road of worldly prosperity, is a mighty folly." He was pleased with an ingenious similitude of Dr. Sale's, who compares the good things of this life to mushrooms, which need so many precautions in eating, that wholly to wave the dish is the safest wisdom.

To corporal indulgences none was ever more indifferent. Indeed, he practised a rigorous abstemiousness, keeping three fasts in the week, and one of them always on the Sabbath ; not from a superstitious esteem of the bodily penance, but in order to make the soul light and active for the enjoyment of that sacred festival. His nephew thinks that he injured his health by excessive abstinence : but his own maxim was, "that little eating, and little speaking, do no one any harm ;" and he would say, pleasantly, when dinner was announced, "Well, since we are condemned to this, let us sit down."

When his sister once invited him to eat of a particular dish, extolling it as good, he declined it, saying, "What is it good for but to please a wanton taste? One thing forborne is better than twenty things taken." "But," answered Mrs. Lightmaker, "why were these things bestowed on us?" "To see," he rejoined, "how well we could forbear them;" and then added, "Shall I eat of this delicacy while a poor man wants his dinner?" He thought people in general much too expensive and curious in the preparation of their meals, and wished this domestic profusion were turned into a channel of distribution to the poor. Everything beyond the mere necessities of life he termed the overflowings of a full cup, which ought not to run to waste, but descend into the poor man's platter. The gratification of bodily appetite would not, he was persuaded, be so much reckoned on, if professed Christians had more "spiritual sensuality," as he often termed that ardent relish, which is the characteristic of renewed souls, for the meat and drink, the hidden manna of God's immortal banquet.

He used to compare a man's station in this life to an imprisonment; and observed that, although it is becoming to keep the place of our confinement clean and neat, it were ill done to build upon it." His sister thinking he carried his indifference to earthly

things too far, and that his munificence required some check, said to him once, "If you had a wife and children, you must not act thus;" his answer was, "I know not how it *would* be, but I know how it *should* be. 'Enoch walked with God, and begat sons and daughters.' "

In truth, his liberality was boundless. All he received was distributed to the poor, except the bare pittance which his necessities imperiously demanded for himself. Unwilling, however, to gain any credit for beneficence, he commonly dispensed his bounty through the hands of others, as we learn from Bishop Burnet, who officiated as his almoner in London.

In exemplification of his humane and amiable condescension to his friends and dependants, there is an anecdote, which will not disgrace our pages. He once had a Roman Catholic servant, who made a point of abstaining from flesh on fast days prescribed by the Romish calendar. Leighton, being apprised of this by Mrs. Lightmaker, commented on the vanity of such scruples, yet requested her to indulge the poor man with such fare as suited his erroneous piety, lest the endeavor to dissuade him from the practice should drive him to falsehood or prevarication. "For to this," he added, "many poor creatures are impelled, not so much from a



corrupt inclination, as for want of a handsome truth." So gentle was he in his construction of the faults and foibles of others.

It is of little moment to ascertain, even were it possible, whether this be the identical man-servant, whose idle pranks have earned him a never-dying fame in Dunblane and its neighborhood. The following story may be taken as a sample of the provocations, with which this thoughtless fellow used to try his master's equanimity. Having a fancy one morning for the diversion of fishing, he locked the door of the house, and carried off the key, leaving his master imprisoned. He was too much engrossed with his sport to think of returning till the evening, when the only admonition he received for his gross behavior from the meek bishop was, "John, when you next go a fishing, remember to leave the key in the door."

The whole history of Leighton's life proclaims his abhorrence of persecution. It is related that his sister once asked him, at the request of a friend, what he thought was the mark of the Beast, at the same time adding, "I told the inquirer, that you would certainly answer that you could not tell." "Truly, you said well," replied he; "but if I might fancy what it were, it would be something like a pair of horns that pusheth his neighbors, as hath

been so much seen and practised in church and state." He also passed a severe sentence on the Romanists, "who, in their zeal for making proselytes, fetched ladders from hell to scale heaven;" and he deeply lamented that men of the reformed church should ever have given in to similar measures.

We have seen, in the narrative of his public conduct, how firmly he withstood the cruel measures set on foot to produce a uniformity of worship in Scotland. Swords and halberds, tongs and pincers, were, in his esteem, most improper instruments for advancing the knowledge and practice of religion. "For himself, he would suffer anything rather than touch a hair of the head, even of those who labored under such pitiable maladies as errors in faith must be accounted: or, if he did meddle with them, it should be with such a gentle touch as would prove the friendliness of his disposition and purpose." "I prefer," he has been heard to say, "an erroneous honest man before the most orthodox knave in the world; and I would rather convince a man that he has a soul to save, and induce him to live up to that belief, than to bring him over to my opinion in whatsoever else beside. Would to God that men were but as holy as they might be, in the worst of forms now among us! Let us press them to be holy,

and miscarry if they can." Being told of a person who had changed his persuasion, all he said was, "Is he more meek, more dead to the world? If so, he has made a happy change."

It is related of him, that going one day to visit a leading minister of the presbytery, he found him discoursing to his company on the duties of a holy life. Leighton, instead of turning off to the subject of the current reasons for nonconformity, though he had gone for the express purpose of discussing them, instantly fell in with the train of conversation, and concluded his visit without attempting to change it. To some of his friends who remonstrated with him on this apparent oversight, "Nay," he replied, "the good man and I were in the main agreed; and for the points in which we differ, they are mostly unimportant; and though they be of moment, it is advisable, before pressing any, to win as many volunteers as we can."

This feature of his character is further illustrated by an anecdote, which there is every reason to believe authentic. A friend calling upon him one day, and not meeting him at home, learned, on inquiry, that he was gone to visit a sick Presbyterian minister on a horse which he had borrowed of the Catholic priest.

His sobriety of mind and soundness of judgment

ought not to be passed over in silence. These qualities were conspicuous in his never pretending to develope the secret things of God, notwithstanding the variety of his learning, and his talent for high speculation. Instead of hazarding a guess on a difficult point, to which he had been requested to turn his thoughts, he said to the inquirer, on meeting him some time afterwards, "I have not yet got the lesson you set me." And to his nephew, who complained that there was a certain text of Scripture which he could not understand, his answer was, "And many more that I cannot." In reverently standing aloof from those mysteries of the Divine nature and government, which are enshrined in a light no mortal eye can gaze upon undazzled, he discovered a judgment equal to his modesty, and exemplified the saying of Solomon, that "with the lowly is wisdom." Being once interrogated about the saints reigning with Christ, he tried to elude the question by merely replying, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Pressed, however, to give his opinion, whether or not the saints would exercise rule in the earth, although Christ should not in person assume the sovereignty, he answered with exquisite judgment, "If God hath appointed any such thing for us, he will give us heads to bear such liquor : our preferment shall not

make us reel." Prying into matters of this nature, which the Spirit of God has apparently sealed up from man's inquisitiveness, was, in his estimation, indecent and dangerous ; and he thought that passionate curiosity, which overleaps the boundaries of revelation, might be well rebuked by the angel's answer to Manoah, " Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret ?" " Enough" he said, " is discovered to satisfy us that righteousness and judgment are within, although round about his throne are clouds and darkness ;" and he blamed those, " who boldly venture into the very thick darkness and deepest recesses of the Divine Majesty."

How discreet and tender a friend he was to persons laboring under religious doubts and perplexities, the two following letters bear witness.

"MADAM,

" Though I have not the honor to be acquainted with your ladyship, yet a friend of ours has acquainted me with your condition ; though I confess the unfittest of all men to minister anything of spiritual relief to any person, either by prayer or advice to you ; but he could have imparted such a thing to none of greater secrecy, and withal, of greater sympathy and tender compassion toward such as are exercised with those kind of conflicts,

as having been formerly acquainted with the like myself: all sorts of sceptical and doubtful thoughts touching those great points having not only passed through my head, but some of them have for some time sat most fast and painfully upon my mind; but in the name of the Lord they were at length quite dispelled and scattered. And O that I could live and bless Him who is my deliverer and strength, my rock and fortress, where I have now found safety from these incursions! and I am very confident you shall shortly find the same: only wait patiently on the Lord, and hope in him, for you shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance; and it is that alone that can enlighten you, and clear your mind of all those fogs and mists that now possess it, and calm those storms that are raised within. You do well to read good books that are proper for your help, but rather the shortest and plainest than the more tedious and voluminous, that sometimes entangle a perplexed mind yet more, by grasping many more questions, and answers, and arguments, than is needful; but, above all, still cleave to the incomparable spring of light and divine comfort—the Holy Scriptures, even in despite of all doubts concerning them. And when you find your thoughts in disorder, and at a loss, entertain no dispute with them by any means at that time, but

rather divert from them to short prayer or to other thoughts, and sometimes to well-chosen company, or the best you can have where you are ; and at some other time, when you find yourself in a calmer and serener temper, and upon the vantage ground of a little more confidence in God, then you may resume your reasons against unbelief, yet so as to beware of casting yourself into new disturbances ; for when your mind is in a sober temper, there is nothing so suitable to its strongest reason, nothing so wise and noble as religion ; and to believe it is so rational, that as now I am framed, I am afraid that my belief proceeds too much from reason, and is not so divine and spiritual as I would have it ; only when I find (as in some measure through the grace of God I do) that it hath some real virtue and influence upon my affections and track of life, I hope there is somewhat of a higher tincture in it. But, in point of reason, I am well assured that all that I have heard from the wittiest Atheists and libertines in the world, is nothing but bold raving and madness, and their whole discourse a heap of folly and ridiculous nonsense ; for what probable account can they give of the wonderful frame of the visible world, without the supposition of an eternal and infinite Power, and wisdom, and goodness, that formed it and themselves, and all things in it ? And what can they

think of the many thousands of martyrs, in the first age of Christianity, that endured not simple death, but all the inventions of the most exquisite tortures, for their belief of that most holy faith ; which, if the miracles that confirmed it had not persuaded them so, they themselves had been thought the most prodigious miracles of madness in all the world ? It is not want of reason on the side of religion that makes fools disbelieve it ; but the interest of their brutish lusts and dissolute lives makes them wish it were not true : and there is this vast difference betwixt you and them ; they would gladly believe less than they do, and you would gladly believe more than you do : they are sometimes pained and tormented with apprehensions that the doctrine of religion is or may be true ; and you are perplexed with suggestions to doubt of it, which are to you as unwilling and unwelcome as those apprehensions of its truth are to them. Think you that Infinite Goodness is ready to take advantage of his poor creatures, and to reject and condemn those that, against all the assaults made upon them, desire to keep their heart for him, and to acknowledge him, and to love him, and live to him ? He made us, and knows our mould ; and, as a father pities his children, pities them that fear him, for he is their Father, and the tenderest and kindest of all fathers ;



and as a father pities his child when it is sick, and in the rage and raving of a fever, though it even utter reproachful words against himself, shall not our dearest Father both forgive and pity those thoughts, in any child of his, that arise not from any wilful hatred of him, but are kindled in hell within them? And no temptation hath befallen you in this but that which has been incident to men, and to the best of men; and their heavenly Father hath not only forgiven them, but in due time hath given them a happy issue out of them, and so he will assuredly do to you. In the mean time, when these assaults come thickest and most violently upon you, throw yourself down at his footstool, and say, ‘O God, Father of mercies, save me from this hell within me; I acknowledge, I adore, I bless thee, whose throne is in heaven with thy blessed Son the crucified Jesus, and thy Holy Spirit; and though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee; but I cannot think thou canst hate and reject a poor soul that desires to love thee, and cleave to thee as long as I can hold by the skirts of thy garment, until thou violently shake me off, which I am confident thou wouldst not do, because thou art love and goodness itself, and thy mercies endure forever.’ Thus, or in what other frame your soul shall be carried to vent itself into his bosom, be assured

your words, yea, your silent sighs and breathings, shall not be lost, but shall have a most powerful voice, and ascend into his ear, and shall return to you with messages of peace and love in due time ; and in the mean time, with secret supports that you faint not, nor sink into those deeps that threaten to swallow you up. But I have wearied you instead of refreshing you. I will add no more, but that the poor prayers of one of the unworthiest in the world, such as they be, shall not be wanting in your behalf ; and he begs a share in yours, for neither you nor any in the world need that charity more than he does. Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart : wait, I say, on the Lord.”

The next is to some Christian friend, whose name is unknown.

“CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

“ Though I had very little vacant time for it, yet I would have seen you, if I could have presumed it might have been any way useful to the quickening of your mind. However, since I heard of your condition, I cease not daily, as I can, to present it to Him who alone can effectually speak peace to your heart ; and I am confident, in due time, will do so. It is he that stilleth the raging of the sea, and by a

word can turn the violent storm into a great calm. What the particular thoughts or temptations are that disquiet you, I know not ; but whatsoever they are, look above them, and labor to fix your eye on that infinite goodness which never faileth them that by naked faith do absolutely rely and rest upon it, and patiently wait upon Him who hath pronounced them all, without exception, blessed that do so. Say often within your heart, ‘ Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him ;’ and if, after some interval, your troubled thoughts do return, check them still with the holy Psalmist’s words : ‘ Why art thou cast down, O my soul,’ etc. If you can thoroughly sink yourself down through your own nothingness unto Him who is all, and, entirely renouncing your own will, embrace that blest and holy will in all things ; there I am sure you shall find that rest, which all your own distresses and all the powers of darkness shall not be able to deprive you of. I incline not to multiply words ; and, indeed, other advice than this I have none to give you. The Lord of peace, by the sprinkling of the blood of his Son Jesus, and the sweet breathings of the great Comforter, his own Holy Spirit, give you peace in himself. Amen.”

We learn from Bishop Burnet, “ that his thoughts were lively, oft out of the way and surprising, yet

just and genuine ;” and several of his sayings might be adduced to justify this praise, and to show him well read in the science of human nature and its management. It was an aphorism of his, that “ One half of the world lives upon the madness of the other.” He well knew, writes his nephew, when it was expedient to be silent, and when it behooved him to speak—a knowledge not less rare than valuable. One of his favorite axioms was, that “ all things operate according to the disposition of the subject ;” and he was of opinion, that the silence of a good man will sometimes convey a more effectual lesson than his discourse. “ Two things,” he observed, “ are commonly requisite to make religious advice salutary, namely, time and judgment ;” and he thought the following maxim might often be remembered with advantage—*philosophandum, sed paucis*. Accordingly, he was quite against jading hearers with discourses beyond the measure of their understanding, or their patience : “ for ’tis better,” said he, “ to send them home still hungry than surfeited.” He was no advocate in general for crude and abrupt exposures of unpalatable truths. Being told of an author, who had entitled his performance, “ Naked truth whipt and stript,” his remark was, “ It might have been better to clothe it ;” and he saw nothing praiseworthy in the roughness,

misnamed honesty, of some people, "who would rather overturn the boat than trim it." We only add, in illustration of this point of his character, a prayer which he used to offer up, which is pregnant with melancholy meaning: "Deliver me, O Lord, from the errors of wise men; yea, and of good men."

Humility was a beautiful trait in the character of this excellent man, which shaded and recommended his other great and good qualities. Far from loving the preëminence, and courting applause, he always kept in the background, and was occasionally forced from retirement only by an imperious sense of duty. Instead of pushing himself at any time into notice, he shrunk as the sensitive plant when it is touched. The body of death sat heavy upon him, and, deeply sensible of his own imperfections, he grew in humility as he grew in holiness. His diffidence, however, was extreme; for, though frequently solicited to publish discourses, he would never consent; and none of his invaluable works were printed during his life.

Burnet mentions that "he seemed to have the lowest thoughts of himself possible, and to desire that all other persons should think as meanly of him as he did of himself; and he bore all sorts of ill-usage and reproach, like a man that took pleasure in them."

The character of his mind is finely illustrated in the following passage from one of his letters :

“ And now I have begun, I would end just here ; for I have nothing to say, nothing of affairs (to be sure) private nor public ; and to strike up to discourses of devotion, alas ! what is there to be said but what you sufficiently know, and daily read, and daily think, and, I am confident, daily endeavor to do ? And I am beaten back, if I had a great mind to speak of such things, by the sense of so great deficiency in doing those things that the most ignorant Christians cannot but know. Instead of all fine notions, I fly to *κύριε ἐλέησον, Χριστὲ ἐλέησον* (Lord, have mercy ; Christ have mercy.) I think them the greatest heroes and excellent persons of the world, that attain to high degrees of pure contemplation and divine love ; but next to those, them that are aspiring to that, and falling short of it, fall down into deep humility and self-contempt, and a real desire to be despised and trampled on by all the world ; and I believe that they that sink lowest into that depth, stand nearest to advancement to those other heights ; for the great King, who is the fountain of that honor, hath given us this character of himself, that he resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Farewell, my dear friend, and be so

charitable as sometimes, in your addresses upward, to remember a poor sinner who no day forgets you.

“R. L.

“*December 13, 1676.*”

On the eve of taking a bishoprick, when he perceived how many obstacles there were to his doing the good he wished to others, he said, “Yet one benefit at least will arise from it. I shall break that little idol of estimation my friends have for me, and which I have been so long sick of.” Though he could not be ignorant of the value set on his pulpit discourses, yet he looked upon himself as so ordinary a preacher, and so unlikely to do good, that he was always for giving up his place to other ministers; and after he became a bishop, he always preferred preaching to small congregations, and would never give notice beforehand when he was to fill the pulpit.

Of a piece with his rooted dislike to anything that seemed to imply consequence in himself, was his strong objection to have his portrait taken. When it was requested of him, he testified unusual displeasure, and said, “If you will have my likeness, draw it with charcoal:” meaning, no doubt, that he was *carbone notandus*, as justly obnoxious to scorn and condemnation. His picture was, however, clandestinely taken, when he was about the

middle age ; and as the engravings prefixed to his works are copied from it, it is a pleasure to know from such good authority as his nephew's letter, that it greatly resembled him.

He was possessed of a warm and affectionate disposition, which was not extinguished by his superlative love to God, though it was always kept in due subordination. In his commentary on the epistle of Peter, he remarks, that "our only safest way is to gird up our affections wholly," and he lived up to this principle. Accordingly, after avowing once how partial he was to the amiable character and fine accomplishments of a relation, he added, "Nevertheless, I can readily wean myself from him, if I cannot persuade him to become wise and good. *Sine bonitate nulla majestas, nullus sapor,*" Without goodness there is no majesty, no savor. To him, as to that Holy One of whose spirit he partook largely, whoever did the will of his heavenly Father were more than natural kindred. Such, therefore, of his relations as were Christians indeed, had a double share of his tenderness ; and to the strength of this two-fold bond, not less than to his heavenly-mindedness, we may ascribe his exclamation on returning from the grave in which his brother-in-law had been interred, "Fain would I have thrown myself in with him." A beautiful extract from a letter which he wrote



to that gentleman, on the death of a particularly sweet and promising child, to whom he himself was tenderly attached, may here find a suitable place.

“I am glad of your health, and recovery of your little ones ; but indeed it was a sharp rebuke of a pen that told me your pretty Johnny was dead, and I felt truly more than to my remembrance I did the death of any child in my lifetime. Sweet thing ! and is he so soon laid to sleep ? Happy is he ! Though we shall have no more the pleasure of his lisping and laughing, he shall have no more the pain of crying, nor of being sick, nor of dying ; and hath wholly escaped the trouble of schooling and all other sufferings of boys, and the riper and deeper griefs of riper years ; this poorer life being all along nothing but a linked chain of many sorrows and many deaths. Tell my dear sister she is now so much more akin to the other world, and this will quickly be passed to us all. John is but gone an hour or two sooner to bed as children use to do, and we are undressing to follow. And the more we put off the love of this present world, and all things superfluous, beforehand, we shall have the less to do when we lie down. It will refresh me to hear from you at your leisure. Sir, your affectionate brother,

“R. LEIGHTON.

“EDINERO’, *Jan. 16th.*”

Leighton was a great admirer of rural scenery ; and, in his rides upon the Sussex downs, he often descanted, with sublime fervor, on the marvellous works of the Almighty Architect. Adverting to the boundless variety of creation, he remarked, that there is no wonder after a straw, omnipotence being as necessary to make the least things out of nothing as the greatest. But his lofty mind seemed especially to delight in soaring to the celestial firmament, and expatiating through those stupendous vaults, from which so many glorious lamps are hung out, on purpose, he believed, to attract our thoughts to the glory that excelleth ; and “ we miss the chief benefit they are meant to render us, if we use them not to light us up to heaven.” “ It was a long hand,” he would exclaim, “ and a strong hand too, that stretched out this stately canopy above us ; and to him whose work it is we may rightly ascribe most excellent majesty.” After some such expressions of devout amazement, he would sink into silent and adoring contemplation.

Leighton was fond of music, both vocal and instrumental, and delighted in its appropriation to divine uses ; but he disapproved of its being made subservient to a refined sensuality, and declared that he preferred the croaking of frogs to the idle songs, which professed Christians sing and play

without blushing or compunction. He contrasted the harp and psaltery of David, rehearsing the praises of the Lord, with the tabret and pipe, so loathed by Isaiah, because they were employed to inflame the passions and tickle the fancies of the lewd, and to divert their thoughts from those operations of the Lord's hands, "which utter the most harmonious music."

We have seen that his walk was direct to heaven, and the drift of his conversation habitually unearthly. He died daily by the mortification of his natural appetites and affections, and he was visibly perfect in that frame of mind which he wondered should not be universal, "in which every second thought is of death." It was not in a melancholy tone that he touched on this serious subject; for the illusions spread over earthly things had long since faded away from his eyes, which were fixed, in the sublime anticipations of faith, on those blissful realities that shall open upon the redeemed of the Lord when they have shaken off mortality. To him, therefore, death had lost its sting; it was become a pleasant theme, and gave occasion to some of his most cheerful sayings. He would compare this heavy clod of clay with which the soul is encumbered, to the miry boots of which the traveller gladly divests himself on finishing his journey; and he could not disguise his

own wish to be speedily unclothed, instead of lingering below till his garments were worn out and dropped off through age. In general, his temper was serene rather than gay : but his nephew states, that if ever it rose to an unusual pitch of vivacity, it was when some illness attacked him ; when “ from the shaking of the prison doors, he was led to hope that some of those brisk blasts would throw them open, and give him the release he coveted.” Then he seemed to stand tip-toe on the margin of eternity in a delightful amazement of spirit, eagerly awaiting the summons to depart, and feeding his soul with the prospect of immortal life and glory. Sometimes, while contemplating his future resting-place, he would break out in that noble apostrophe of pious George Herbert :

“ O let me roost and nestle there ;  
Then of a sinner thou art rid,  
And I of hope and fear.”

Hearing once of the death of a portly man, he exclaimed, “ How is it that A—— has broken through those goodly brick walls, while I am kept in by a bit of flimsy deal ?” He would say, pleasantly, that he had his night-cap on, and rejoiced that it was so near bedtime, or rather so near the hour of rising, to one who had long lain awake in the dark ; and, pointing to the children of the family one evening,

who were showing symptoms of weariness, and importuning to be undressed, he said, "Shall I, who am threescore and ten, be loth to go to bed?" This world he considered a state of nonage, and the land of mature man a land very far off. No saying of uninspired men pleased him better than that of Seneca: *Illa dies, quam ut supremam metuisses, æternitatis natalis est*, "That day which you dread as the last, is the birthday of eternity." His alacrity to depart resulted from his earnest desire to "see and enjoy perfection, in the perfect sense of it, which he could not do and live." "That consummation," he would say, "is only a hope deferred, but when it cometh it will be a tree of life." Perhaps, indeed, he would have been over-anxious to take wing, had not his impatience been balanced by profound submission to the Divine good pleasure. This alone prevented an excessive desire for the moment to arrive, when his soul, completely fledged, should spring into its proper element; should remove far away, not only from the wickedness of a profane world, but also from the childishnesses of religious Christians; and should be at rest amidst the truly reformed churches of just men made perfect—those happy circumferences, as he termed them, which are intimately and perfectly united to their Divine centre, and to each other.

The following is an extract of a letter supposed to have been written a short time before his death :

“I find daily more and more reason without me, and within me yet much more, to pant and long to be gone. I am grown exceeding weary in writing and speaking, yea, almost in thinking, when I reflect how cloudy our clearest thoughts are ; but I think again, what other can we do till the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, as one that lieth awake in the night must be thinking ; and one thought that will likely oftenest return, when by all other thoughts he finds little relief, is, *When will it be day ?*”

Yet Leighton, for the comfort of weak believers be it recorded, did not pretend to an absolute assurance of final salvation. Conversing one day, in his wonted strain of holy animation, of the blessedness of being fixed as a pillar in the heavenly Jerusalem, to go no more out, Rev. iii. 12, he was interrupted by a near relation exclaiming, “Ah ! but you have assurance.” “No, truly,” he replied, “only a good hope, and a great desire to see what they are doing on the other side ; for of this world I am heartily weary.”

With respect to his mental qualities, it may be

safely affirmed by the most scrupulous encomiast, that he was gifted with a capacious mind, a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a lively fancy, a correct taste, a sound and discriminating judgment. All these excellences are conspicuous in almost every page of his writings: for in Leighton's compositions there is an extraordinary evenness. One is not recruited here and there, by a striking thought or a brilliant sentence, from the fatigue of toiling through many a heavy paragraph, but "one spirit in them rules;" and while he occasionally mounts to a surpassing height, he seldom or never sinks into flatness. The reason is, that he is always master of his subject, with a clear conception of his own meaning and purpose, and a perfect command of all the subsidiary materials; and still more, that his soul is always teeming with those divine inspirations, which seem vouchsafed only from time to time to ordinary mortals.

## CHAPTER IV.

## BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS WRITINGS.

WE shall now present our readers with a sketch of the leading excellences of Leighton's writings, abridged from his life, written by the Rev. J. Jerment, to which we are indebted for several extracts.

Leighton's acquaintance with classical literature was various and profound, but divinity was his principal study. His discourses possess uncommon merit; and, though they must labor under the disadvantage of posthumous works, none of them being intended by him for the public eye, and therefore not having been touched by his finishing hand, they nevertheless rank high both in matter and language. His works may be compared to a river, deep and clear, gentle and pleasant, which, winding through the valleys, refreshes, adorns and fructifies, wherever it flows. The streams have, for many years, made glad the city of God.

Leighton preached the Gospel both in the restricted and in the enlarged sense of the term. The glad tidings of full and free salvation through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the grace of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit, were published by this faithful messenger. Yet he neglected not to preach



the moral law for the conviction of transgressors, and as an immutable rule of life to them who believe. Nay, all revealed truths which form the links of one chain, and constitute the parts of one fabric, were attended to by Leighton, and exhibited in their proper place, order, and connection. The perfections, personal subsistence, and counsels of the Deity ; the primitive state and the fall of man ; the guilt and depravity of the human race ; the various workings and effects of moral corruption ; the essential and mediatorial characters of the Saviour ; the divinity of his person, his substitution in the place of the guilty, and his complete satisfaction for sin ; the personality, divinity, operations, and influences of the Holy Spirit ; the free call of the Gospel ; the necessity of an appropriating faith ; justification freely by grace ; the necessity of a new nature, and of holiness ; perseverance in true religion ; the future felicity of the righteous, and eternal misery of the wicked : these were the topics on which this preacher of righteousness dwelt with perspicuity and energy. One or other of them occurs in every page, almost in every sentence of his writings. Generally, they appear as rich clusters, not as two or three berries on the uppermost bough. The trees of knowledge and of life, laden with the choicest fruits, were never per

haps more closely united than in the writings of Leighton.

Moreover, it not a little enhances the value of his writings, that he is fully aware how far the legitimate range of human inquiry extends, and what is the boundary Divine wisdom hath affixed to man's inquisitiveness. While the half-learned theologian beats about in the dark, and vainly attempts a passage through metaphysical labyrinths, which it is the part of sober wisdom not to enter, the sagacious Leighton distinctly sees the line, beyond which speculation is folly; and in stopping at that limit he displays a promptness of decision, commensurate with his unwavering certainty in proceeding up to it.

The language of Leighton is unexceptionable, and extremely guarded; he watches with the most vigilant care against legality on the one hand, and antinomianism on the other.

Sublimity of thought, and sometimes of language, is another quality of his writings. The mind of Leighton was of a superior cast, and fitted to catch a portion of celestial elevation and fire. Of an ardent and feeling soul, he kindled and thrilled at the sight of objects adapted by their own nature, and by the manner of representing them, to astonish and entrance. Few pages in his works are

without instances of sublimity, especially of sublime thought. While there is nothing low and groveling, he frequently rises to the majestic. Two passages of this kind may be mentioned, and they are two among a great multitude equally grand.

The first is in his discourse on Isaiah lx. 1; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," etc.

"Arise then, *for the glory of the Lord is risen*. The day of the Gospel is too precious that any of it should be spent in sleep and idleness, or worthless business. Worthless business detains many of us; *arise*, immortal souls, from moiling in the dust, and working in the clay, like *Egyptian* captives. Address yourselves to more noble work; there is a Redeemer come that will pay your ransom, and rescue you from such vile service for more excellent employment. It is strange how the souls of Christians can so much forget their first original from heaven, and their new hopes of returning thither, and the rich price of their redemption, and forgetting all these, dwell so low, and dote so much upon trifles: how is it that they hear not their Well-beloved's voice, crying, *Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away?* Though the eyes of true believers are so enlightened that they shall not sleep unto death, yet their spirits are often seized with a kind

of drowsiness and slumber, and sometimes even then when they should be of most activity. The time of Christ's check to his three disciples made it very sharp, though the words are mild: *What! could ye not watch with me one hour?* Shake off, believing souls, that heavy humor. *Arise*, and satiate the eye of faith with the contemplation of Christ's beauty, and follow after him till you attain the place of full enjoyment. And you others that never yet saw him, *arise*, and admire his matchless excellency. The things you esteem great are so but through ignorance of his greatness; his brightness, if you saw it, would obscure to you the greatest splendor of the world, as all those stars that go never down upon us, yet they are swallowed up in the surpassing light of the sun when it arises. *Arise from the dead, and he shall give you light. Arise, and work while it is day, for the night shall come wherein none can work*, says our Saviour himself. Happy are they that arise early in the morning of their youth; for the day of life is very short, and the art of Christianity long and difficult. Is it not a grievous thing, that men never consider why they came into the world till they be upon the point of going out again, nor think how to live till they be summoned to die? But most of all unhappy, he that never wakens out of that pleasing dream of false

happiness, till he fall into eternal misery: *arise*, then, betimes, and prevent this sad awakening."

The second is from his sermon on John xxi. 22 ; "What is that to thee ? Follow thou me."

"Let us therefore follow the Holy Jesus. Other concernments concern us not, compared to this. *What is that to thee ?* may be said of all things beside this. All the world is one great impertinency to him who contemplates God and his Son Jesus. Great things, coaches, furniture, or houses, concern the outward pomp or state of the world, but not the necessities of life ; neither can they give ease to him that is pinched with any one trouble. He that hath twenty houses lies but in one at once ; he that hath twenty dishes on his table hath but one mouth to fill ; so, *ad supervacua sudatur*, 'he sweats about superfluities.' All are uncertain ; sudden storms fall on ; and riches fly away as a bird to heaven, and leave those who look after them sinking to hell in sorrow.

"A Christian is solicitous about nothing : if he be raised higher, it is what he desires not ; if he fall down again, he is where he was. A well-fixed mind, though the world should crack about him, shall be in quiet ; but when we come to be stretched on our death-bed, things will have another visage ;

it will pull the rich from his treasure, strip the great of his robes and glory, and snatch the amorous gallant from his fair beloved mistress, and from all we either have or grasp at. Only sin will stick fast, and follow us; those black troops will clap fatal arrests on us, and deliver us over to the jailor. Are these contrivances, or the dark dreams of melancholy? All the sublimities of holiness may be arrived at by the deep and profound belief of these things. Let us therefore ask, Have we walked thus, and dressed our souls by this pattern? But this hath a nearer aspect to pastors, who should be copies of the fair original, and second patterns who follow nearer Christ: they should be imitating him in humility, meekness, and contempt of the world, and particularly in affection to souls, feeding the flock of God. Should we spare labor, when he spared not his own blood?"

Leighton's style is generally distinguished for clearness and simplicity, and when the most elevated, is the most simple and clear. He did not pay much attention to an exact arrangement of his subjects.

A sweet and mellow pathos is certainly one characteristic of his style; but there is nothing in it languid or effeminate. While the suavity of his

spirit flavors all his productions, the strength of his well-informed and masculine understanding makes them abundantly solid and nutritious. He is not like a pulpy reed, distilling luscious juices : he is *a rock pouring forth rivers of oil*.

No formal method occurs in any of his discourses ; he seldom gives more than one sermon on the same text ; condenses and throws out massy thoughts, complete and entire ; and, when he strikes a rich vein, pursues it in a few sentences or pages with astonishing dexterity. Somewhat of the French manner, without its lightness and gayety, appears in his compositions.

It may be naturally expected from this account, that our author would be remarkable for variety. His invention was fertile and forcible ; being applied by a mind well stored, and guided by a mature and vigorous judgment. He treats a vast variety of subjects with the grace of novelty, and the same subject always in a new manner.

It is difficult to say on what point Leighton excelled. He touches occasionally every doctrine of the Gospel, and always with the hand of a master ; and, in every discourse, exhibits fully the way of salvation. In his sermons, doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion are finely blended.

Neither can it have escaped the observation of one

at all conversant with his writings, that it is never the purpose of his mind to make good any particular system of divinity, nor to fortify its weak positions, and set off its strong proofs and advantages. He is constantly aiming at higher matters; and shakes off with disdain the servile fetters, which would shackle the free and generous spirit of religion. Leighton, though the humblest of mankind, was not weakly distrustful of his own powers; and therefore we never find him slavishly treading in the footsteps of predecessors. Yet, though free and independent, he is not audacious and dogmatical.

The points, indeed, on which his soul was constantly fixed, whence accrues such a heavenly grandeur to all his discourses, were the noble vocation of a Christian, and the height to which a regenerate soul ought to rise above sublunary objects: the nearness of death; the mysterious vastness of the Godhead; the stupendous concerns of eternity; and the blessedness resulting from close communion with the Father of Spirits, and from conformity to the pattern which Jesus Christ bequeathed to his followers, of consummate purity and virtue. When Leighton addresses himself to these matters, he does indeed utter his voice from high places; and impresses us with the idea of a man, who, from an eminence beyond the region of fogs and clouds and



meteors, has surveyed whatever is above and beneath, things in heaven and things upon the earth, with a vast advantage for rating justly the value of the one and of the other. He seems to have lately come down from conversing with God upon the mount, anointed, and preëminently qualified to represent the high-priest of the Christian temple ; to draw aside the outward veil, and to disclose the glorious spirit of religion in its innermost sanctuary.

In his discourses there is the solemnity of a man of God and a messenger of the King eternal. After a short and impressive preface, Leighton spent a few minutes in prayer, and then preached. Standing in the pulpit, he remembered that having just spoken *to* God, he was now speaking *for* him. An air of deep seriousness pervaded all his discourses. He constantly spoke as a dying man to fellow mortals ; as a herald to rebels, who have only a moment to consider ; as a father to his children about their most important concerns. One sees, in every sentence, the dignified, earnest, faithful ambassador of Heaven.

It is impossible to dip into his writings, without observing with how brilliant a fancy he was endowed. They sparkle with beautiful images, which either are drawn from the magazines of Scripture,

or are such as would naturally present themselves to an inventive and elegant mind, furnished, as Leighton's was, with the literary products of every clime and age, and with the accumulated stores of civil and ecclesiastical erudition; and intent upon making whatever it has collected subservient to the illustration of divine truth. By his holy skill sacred learning is made to purify profane, and profane learning to elucidate and embellish sacred. The gold and silver of Egypt are moulded into vessels for the tabernacle of Jehovah; while the living waters of the sanctuary are taught to meander through fields of classic lore, imparting to their produce celestial fragrancy and virtue.

In the works of Leighton, the thoughts rise naturally from the subject, distil as honey from the comb, and run clear to the last drop. He always enters on his subject like one who is master of it; and, throughout the discourse, seems to be at home, in a neat dress, and with easy manners. Even learned references and allusions, though a kind of foreigners, are introduced without any constraint, or stiff ceremony, and have almost the appearance and ease of natives.

But that which adds so peculiar a zest to his compositions, is the quality usually denominated *Uction*. His mouth spake out of the abundance of his heart.

Instead of a dry didactic statement, which, how faultless soever in doctrine and form, will seldom beget sympathy, we have in him the libation upon the sacrifice—the holy affections of his soul poured out on the solid products of his understanding, and imparting to them a delicious odor and irresistible penetrancy. In every page of his books there is an impassioned earnestness, a soul-subduing pathos, which make it impossible to doubt that the impressions he strives to communicate are deeply engraven on his spirit. Indeed he does not seem to appeal so much to his readers, as unconsciously to let them into the chamber of his own soul, on which they may see the Gospel traced in its native lineaments: and may recognize the loveliness of divine truth in the most perfect union, of which it is capable, with the heart and understanding of a frail and fallible mortal.

In the sermons of Leighton there is nothing puerile, low, or ludicrous; no fantastic conceits and impertinent pleasantries; no wild interpretations of Scripture and bombastic rhapsodies; no desultory and pedantic excursions. He scorned to set off his matter, or scrupled to profane it, with a tawdry dress and garish colors. His phraseology, at once sedate and noble, well becomes the ambassador of Heaven; and denotes a profound veneration for the

Oracles of God, a pious dread of distorting their sense, or giving a human figure and color to any portion of revelation, and an ardent desire to convert thoughtless sinners, and to edify serious believers. Such were his matter and diction, with which his manner in the pulpit comported. Superior to popular applause, he had no peculiarities about his delivery ; unless indeed simplicity, earnestness, and gravity, were at that time uncommon qualities. He never aimed at effect by oratorical grimace, nor strove, as was much the practice, to carry his hearers by a tempest of voice and gesture ; and indeed the natural feebleness of his voice would have interdicted such exertions, had his taste permitted them. But, when he preached, the manner was in admirable harmony with the message ; and so well did the majesty and beauty of his enunciation accord with the solemn truths of which he was the herald, that the congregations he addressed were subdued and enchained, as if by the magic of an unearthly eloquence.

Seriousness is essential to unction ; and this includes not merely warmth, but a certain heavenly, penetrating strain in the turn of sentiment and expression : when discourses are delivered there must be a similar strain in the modulation of the voice, and in the whole manner.

To impart sap, and vital heat, the pure Gospel is necessary ; and for the want of it, no abilities, no correctness, no elegance, can possibly compensate. Sermons, from which the peculiar doctrines of Christianity are almost wholly excluded, may paint to the imagination, but never to the heart : they exhibit in their finest imagery only beautiful icicles, and all their flowers bloom in the polar regions. These may be the effect, it is true, of a lively and warm fancy ; but the heart of the preacher appears to be untouched, and discovers nothing of the ardor and sweets of devotion.

Leighton's discourses have a high degree of warmth and unction. They are a sweet savor of Christ, and as ointment poured forth. Their beauty is as the olive-tree, and their smell as Lebanon. The face of the preacher is anointed with the oil of gladness, shines with heavenly lustre, and diffuses fragrance all around. One cannot read a page without being moved and refreshed : a soft, balmy sensation thrills through the soul.

The works of Leighton, however, are not merely suitable, but highly gratifying to a spiritual taste. Without a single exception, they are eminently practical.

Leighton excels in explaining and urging religious and moral duties ; and he always grafts and

builds them on the doctrines of the Gospel. These are the proper root of the tree, and the only foundation of a good superstructure.

Our author never loses sight, for a moment, either of the necessity of religious and moral conduct, or of the place which it should occupy. Some of his discourses are entirely practical ; but still he keeps in view the root and foundation. In other discourses, which are doctrinal, he intersperses practical hints ; and shows at large the necessity of obedience to the law, in both its essential parts. His highest raptures are the reverse of enthusiasm ; as they lead, with increased force, to the way of the Divine commandments.

But the crowning excellence of Leighton's discourses is, the deep and rich vein of experimental religion which runs through them all. Experimental religion is to the practice of piety and morality, what life is to motion, or the heart to the body—the necessary spring and impulse. The former, too, always includes proper exercise of soul, or is accompanied with it. The God of grace meets those who rejoice, and work righteousness ; those who remember him in his ways, and ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Discourses, in which religious experience and religious exercises are totally omitted, or scarcely ever touched, are essen-

tially defective. The tree must be made good, that the fruit may be sound and sweet ; the fountain be purified, that the waters may be salutary. Accordingly, Leighton often urges the absolute necessity of the first and radical experience of religion, in a change of nature. He dwells frequently on religious experiences and exercises, both pleasant and painful ; on the various workings of gracious principles, and of remaining depravity. Our author, at the same time, warns against enthusiasm ; or heat without light, impression without practice. While, on the one hand, he directs and comforts the genuine saint ; on the other he exposes and alarms the self-deceiver. Some have remarked, and justly, that among the reasons why the Gospel is committed to men, and not to angels, God in wisdom and kindness intended that his servants should be capable of entering deeply into the feelings of their hearers, of experiencing the power of saving grace, and exemplifying all the duties of religion. Leighton, in this point of view, was an experimental and practical preacher. He writes like one who knew and felt the terrors of the Lord, and who had also tasted that the Lord is gracious. He appears, in various instances, to be detailing his own experience and exercises ; and sometimes passes from instruction to confession, ejaculation, and praise. As a nurse, he

is not only gentle, and cherisheth ; but takes by the arms, and teaches to go ; and feeds his beloved charge with the same provision which, like the milk of the nurse, had been first received and digested by himself.

There is an inflexible and happy uniformity in Dr. Leighton's writings. Whether he was the Presbyterian minister of Newbottle, or the Bishop of Dunblane, or the Archbishop of Glasgow ; whether he preached in the most obscure parish church, or in the most conspicuous and magnificent cathedral ; before illiterate rustics, or before the high court of Parliament, he published the Gospel of grace with the same plainness and the same warmth.

The following description of his principal works is abridged from the Rev. J. N. Pearson's *Life of Leighton*, to which we are considerably indebted for several portions of his history.

“ The work which is the crown of his posthumous glory, is the *Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Peter*. It is a treasury of sound experimental divinity, and argues an extraordinary ripeness of Christian attainments. It was probably delivered from the pulpit, and is drawn out in the familiar form of exposition ; the clauses, and sometimes the emphatic words of each text being ordinarily ex-



plained in course, and no artificial arrangement observed in discussing the several subjects introduced by the apostle. Still the general scope and coherence of each passage are carefully kept in view, and the main truth, asserted or proved, is never lost sight of in unfolding the particular propositions from which it is educed. The work will always class among the first of uninspired books, and can never cease to constitute the admiration and delight of the Christian and the scholar.

“Next in worth to this Commentary, are his Expositions of ‘The Lord’s Prayer,’ and the ‘Ten Commandments;’ which seem to have been carefully pondered. The fragment of a Commentary on the first eight chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel, has touches of his fine genius, and is imbued with his heavenly spirit. His Meditations on Psalms iv., xxxii., and cxxx., and his Lectures on Psalm xxxix., are sketches only, but they show the hand of a master. The Meditations, which were spoken in Latin to the Edinburgh collegians, are felicitous essays, glistening with holy animation, and are more classically adorned than the Expository Lectures; not, however, in a degree to unfit them for the closet of unlettered devotion.

“In the Latin Prelections, the principal doctrines of the Christian faith are developed with exquisite

learning, judgment, and piety. These lectures constitute a valuable series of theological instructions ; and were probably delivered pretty much in the order in which they are now arranged. After showing that happiness, of which so strong a desire is implanted in the human breast, is not to be drawn from earthly fountains, he proves that an immortal nature must fetch its joys from immortal sources. Hence he is led to treat of the existence, the nature, and the government of God, which he does with equal energy and sobriety ; demonstrating the title such a Being possesses to the affectionate allegiance of his rational creatures, whose felicity must depend on their maintaining that place in the moral system of the universe, wherein the wise economy of the Creator hath fixed them. He then represents the extensive ruin that ensued from the defection of Adam ; and goes on to the reparation, achieved by Messiah, of the injury done to God by the primal sin, and the destruction it brought upon mankind. The nature of Christian salvation is further developed, as consisting in the engrafting of vital and immortal principles in the soul by the mysterious energy of the Holy Spirit ; which process constitutes the true adoption of sinners through the Saviour, and is their temporal initiation to the enjoyment of life eternal. Moreover he expatiates, with great beauty and em-

phasis, on the happiness of a life regulated by the fear of God and by the rules of the Gospel ; and he exhorts the students to put forth all their ardor in prosecuting that divine science, which lays open the passage to imperishable glory.

The style of these lectures justifies Bishop Burnet's commendation of our author's latinity. Not formed upon any one particular pattern, but pure, simple, and flowing, his diction indicates a large and critical acquaintance with the best models. It is the phraseology of a man who thought in Latin, and not of one who clothed in a foreign dress ideas which were preconceived in his native tongue. Hence these dissertations are not mere jingle and glitter, but are solid and argumentative. Useless words and phrases are never introduced to embellish a period ; nor does an apt thought ever seem to be abandoned too soon, or imperfectly evolved, from the writer being at a difficulty how to embody it in a strange language. He moves in Roman armor with as little embarrassment as in a native garb. In these lectures, moreover, which were addressed to literary students, Leighton permits himself to quote largely from heathen authors ; and one is struck with amazement at the extent of his erudition, which is not ostentatiously exposed, but comes in most appropriately wherever it can avail to throw light

upon the subjects he is treating. The whole volume of profane literature seems to be unrolled before him, and is not too expanded for his ample survey. The philosophers, the poets, the historians of Rome and Athens—all the sons of science, whether Jews or Gentiles, ancient or modern—all are cited to pay the various homage, enjoined by natural reason or primeval tradition, to the being, the perfections, the natural and moral government of God; and to confirm the need of a revelation, which should capacitate men to recover, under a new grant and title, the honors, possessions, and immunities forfeited by disobedience.

The Paræneses were short exhortations to the scholars about to graduate, and were composed in Latin. In them it is the speaker's great endeavor to guard his auditors against an overweening estimate of human learning and literary honors, and to incite them to strive after the knowledge of God as he reveals himself to mankind in the Gospel. Each of these hortatory addresses concludes with a beautiful and appropriate prayer; and they, as well as the lectures, breathe an affectionate desire to turn the hearts of the collegians from that vain knowledge which increaseth sorrow, to that true and heavenly wisdom by which all who possess it are exalted to honor.

We now add a few extracts from Dr. Doddridge's Preface to Leighton's works.

“On the whole, the preparing these volumes for the press hath generally taken up a little of my time in the intervals of other business daily, for several months; but I am far from repenting of the labor I have bestowed on it. The delight and edification which I have found in the writings of this *wonderful man* (for such I must deliberately call him) would have been a full equivalent for my pains, separate from all prospect of the effect which they might have upon others. For, truly, I know not that I have ever spent a quarter of an hour in reviewing any of them, but even amidst that interruption which a critical examination of the copy would naturally give, I have felt some impression which I could always wish to retain. I can hardly forbear saying, as a considerable philosopher and eminent divine said to me: ‘There is a spirit in Archbishop Leighton I never met with in any human writings; nor can I read many lines in them without being moved.’

“Indeed it would be difficult for me to say where, but in the Sacred Oracles, I have found such heart-affecting lessons of simplicity and humility, candor and benevolence, exalted piety without the least

tincture of enthusiasm, and an entire mortification to every earthly interest without any mixture of splenetic resentment. Nor can I ever sufficiently admire that artless manner in which he lays open, as it were, his whole breast to the reader, and shows, without seeming to be at all conscious of it himself, all the various graces that can adorn and ennoble the Christian, running like so many veins of precious ore in the rich mine where they grew. And hence, if I mistake not, is that wonderful energy of his discourses, obvious as they seem, unadorned as they really are, which I have observed to be owned by persons of eminent piety in the most different ranks, and amidst all the variety of education and capacity that can be imagined. As every eye is struck by consummate beauty, though in the plainest dress; and the sight of such an object impresses more than any labored description of complexion, features, or air, or any harangue on the nicest rules of proportion which could come into consideration; so in the works of this *great adept in true Christianity*, we do not so much hear of goodness, as see it in its most genuine traces; see him a living image of his Divine Master, for such indeed his writings show, I had almost said demonstrate him to have been, by such internal characters, as surely a bad man could not counterfeit, and no good man can so much as suspect.

“I am very sensible of it, as an honor done to me in the course of Divine Providence, that the task I have here executed should so very unexpectedly be devolved upon me ; but I shall be gloriously rewarded, if the labor I have bestowed upon it be the occasion of promoting those great ends which animated the discourses and actions of the holy man, who has now dwelt so long among the blessed inhabitants of that world after which he so ardently aspired while yet amongst mortals. And let me be permitted to add, that I have some secret hope this publication, in these circumstances, may, among other good effects, promote that spirit of catholicism for which Leighton was so remarkable ; and extend it among various denominations of Christians in the northern and southern parts of our island. If the sincerest language or actions can express the disposition of the heart, it will here be apparent that a diversity of judgment with regard to episcopacy and several forms both of discipline and worship connected with it, have produced in my mind no alienation, no indifference, toward Archbishop Leighton, nor prevented my delighting in his works and profiting by them. In this respect I trust my brethren in Scotland will, for their own sake, and that of religion in general, show the like candor. On the other side, as I have observed with great

pleasure and thankfulness, how much many of the established clergy in this part of Britain are advancing in moderation toward their dissenting brethren, I am fully assured they will not like these excellent pieces the worse for having passed through my hand. It is truly my grief that anything should divide me from the fullest communion with those to whom I am united in bonds of as tender affection as I bear to any of my fellow Christians: and it is my daily prayer that God will, by his gentle, but powerful influence on our minds, mutually dispose us more and more for such a further union as may most effectually consolidate the Protestant cause, remove the scandals our divisions have occasioned, and strengthen our hands in those efforts by which we are attempting—and might then, I hope, more successfully attempt—the service of our common Christianity. In the mean time, I desire most sincerely to bless God for any advances that are made toward it.”

It may gratify some readers to have the will of Archbishop Leighton, showing how he disposed of the property he had at his death. It is as follows:

“AT BROADHURST, *Feb.* 17, 1683.

“Being at present (thanks be to God) in my accustomed health of body, and soundness of mind



and memory, I do write this with my own hand, to signify, that when the day I so much wished and longed for is come, that shall set me free of this prison of clay wherein I am lodged, what I leave behind me of money, goods, or chattels, or whatsoever of any kind was called mine, I do devote to charitable uses ; partly such as I have recommended particularly to my sister, Mrs. Sapphira Lightmaker, and her son, Master Edward Lightmaker of Broadhurst, and the remainder to such other charities as their own discretion shall think fittest. Only I desire each of them to accept of a small token of a little grateful acknowledgment of their great kindness, and trouble they have had with me for some years that I was their guest, the proportion whereof (to remove their scruple of taking it) I did expressly name to themselves, while I was with them, before the writing hereof, and likewise after I have wrote it. But they need not give any account of it to any other, the whole being left to their disposal. Neither, I hope, will any other friends or relations of mine take it unkind, that I bequeath no legacy to any of them, designing, as is said, so entirely to charity the whole remains. Only my books I leave and bequeath to the Cathedral of Dunblane in Scotland, to remain there for the use of the clergy of that diocess. I think I need no more, but that I

appoint my said sister, Mrs. Sapphira Lightmaker of Broadhurst, and her son, Mr. Edward Lightmaker of Broadhurst, joint executors of this my will, if they be both living at my decease, as I hope they shall; or if but one of them shall be surviving, that one is to be the sole executor of it. I hope none will raise any question or doubt about this upon any omission or informality of expression in it; being for prevention thereof as plainly expressed as it could be conceived by me. And this I declare to be the last will and testament of

“ROBERT LEIGHTON.”

We shall close this sketch of Leighton's Life and Writings by a few extracts, which will give some idea of the beauties and excellences of his works. The first is on the same subject as the preceding remarks of Dr. Doddridge, namely,

#### CHRISTIAN UNION AND LOVE.

*Be ye all of one mind—love as brethren.* 1 Peter, iii. 8.

“Of one mind,” doth not only mean union in judgment, but it extends likewise to affection and action. For Christians to be of one mind is not a careless indifferency; this is not a loving agree-

ment, but a dead stupidity, as it is accounting all questions in religion but matters of words and names, as Gallio did. This would not be a knitting together, but a freezing together, as cold congregates all bodies, how heterogeneous soever, sticks, stones, and water ; but heat makes first a separation of different things, and then unites those that are of the same nature.

All that implicit *Romish* agreement that they boast of, what is it but a brutish ignorance of spiritual things, authorised and recommended for that very purpose. 'Tis an easy way to agree if all will put out their eyes, and follow the blind guiding of their judge of controversies.

We shall give some few rules that may be of use to every particular Christian toward this common Christian good of unity of mind. 1. Beware of two extremes that often cause divisions—*captivity to custom* on the one hand, and *affectation of novelty* on the other. 2. Labor for a staid mind that will not be tossed with every wind of doctrine. Eph. iv. 14. 3. In unclear and doubtful things, be not pertinacious, as the weakest minds are readiest to be upon seeming reasons, which tried, will possibly fall to nothing ; yet they are most assured, and cannot suffer a different thought in any from their own. There is naturally this *Popeness* in

every man's mind, and most, I say, in the shallowest—a kind of fancied infallibility in themselves, which makes them CONTENTIOUS, (contrary to the apostle's rule, Phil. ii. 3, "let nothing be done through strife and vain-glory,") and as earnest upon differing in the smallest punctilio as in a high article of faith. 4. Join that which is then the spirit of love, in this particular. Not at all abating affection for every slight difference, (and this the most are a little to blame in,) whereas the abundance of that should rather fill up the gap of these petty disagreements, that they do not appear, nor be at all sensibly to be found.

In your private society seek unanimously your own and each other's spiritual good, having one heart and mind as Christians. The peculiar converse of Christians is to put one another in mind of heaven, and things that are heavenly.

"Love as brethren." Love is the cause of union. They that have the same spirit animating them cannot but have the same mind and the same feelings. And this Spirit is derived from that Head, Christ, in whom Christians live, and move, and have their being. He is the first-born among many brethren. Rom. viii. 29. Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren. Heb. ii. 11.

Where this love is and abounds, it will banish

far away all those dissensions and bitternesses, and those frivolous mistakings which are so frequent among the most. It will pass by many offences and failings; it will cover a multitude of sins. But many that are called Christians, are not indeed of this brotherhood, but are restless, unquiet spirits, biting and devouring one another. Gal. v. 15.

I beseech you, adorn your holy profession, and testify yourselves the disciples and brethren of Jesus Christ by this mutual love. Seek to understand what it is; and, to know it more practically, consider that source of love—that love that the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, 1 John iii. 1; and so be brethren, and thence draw more of this sweet stream of love. “God is love,” says the apostle, 1 John iv. 8; therefore surely where there is most of God, there is most of this divine grace—this holy love. Look upon, and study much, that infinite love of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, toward us. He gave his only-begotten Son. The Son gave himself, and this he hath recommended to us, that even as he loved us, so should we love one another. John xv. 12. We know we cannot reach this highest pattern; that is not meant, but the more we look on it the higher we shall reach in this love,

and shall learn some measure of such love on earth as is in heaven ; and that which so begins here shall be perfected there

#### SIN, THE CAUSE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

At his apprehending, besides the soldiers, that invisible crowd of sins he was to suffer for came about him ; for it was they that laid strongest hold on him ; he could easily have shaken off all the rest, as appears, John xviii. 6 ; but our sins laid the arrest on him, being accounted his, as it is in Psalm xl. 12, "mine iniquities." Now among these were even those sins we call small ; they were of the number that took him, and they were among those instruments of his bloodshed. If the greater were as the spear that pierced his side, the less were as the nails that pierced his hands and his feet ; and the very least as the thorns that were set on his precious head. And the multitude of them made up what was wanting in their magnitude : though they were small, they were many.

#### THE PARDON OF SIN.

The soul perplexed about the pardon of sin finds no relief in all other enjoyments ; all propositions of lower comforts are unsavory and troublesome to it. Tell it of peace and prosperity ; say, however

the world go, you shall have ease and pleasure, and you shall be honored and esteemed by all; yea, though you could make a man sure of these, yet, if his conscience be working and stirred about the matter of his sin, and the wrath of God which is tied close to sin, he will wonder at your impertinency, in that you speak so far from the purpose. Say what you will of these, he still asks, "What do you mean by this? those things answer not me. Do you think I can find comfort in them so long as my sin is unpardoned, and there is a sentence of eternal death standing above my head? I feel even an impress of somewhat of that hot indignation; some flashes of it flying and lighting upon the face of my soul; and how can I take pleasure in these things you speak of? And though I should be senseless, and feel nothing of this all my life, yet how soon shall I have done with it, and the delights that reach no farther! and then to have everlasting burnings, eternity of wrath to enter upon; how can I be satisfied with that estate?" All you offer a man in this posture is as if you should set dainty fare, and bring music with it, to a man lying almost pressed to death under great weights, and should bid him eat and be merry, but lift not off his pressure: you do but mock the man, and add to his misery. On the other hand, he that hath got but a

view of his Christ, and reads his own pardon in Christ's sufferings, can rejoice in this in the midst of all other sufferings, and look on death without apprehension, yea, with gladness, for the sting is out. Christ hath made all pleasant to him by this one thing, that "he suffered once for sins." Christ hath perfumed the cross and the grave, and made all sweet. The pardoned man finds himself light, skips and leaps, and, "through Christ strengthening him," he can encounter any trouble. If you think to shut up his spirit in outward sufferings, he is now, as Samson in his strength, able to carry away on his back the gates with which you would enclose him. Yea, he can submit patiently to the Lord's hand in any correction: "Thou hast forgiven my sin, therefore, deal with me as thou wilt, all is well."

#### THE AFFLICTED CONSCIENCE.

Ask an afflicted conscience if JESUS, that is, a Saviour, be not a precious word, that hath a sovereign value, both a refreshing smell and a healing virtue. The hammer of the law may break a stony heart in pieces, but it is only the blood of Jesus that can soften it. And where it is effectually poured, either upon a wounded soul, it heals it, or upon a hard heart, it mollifies it. For that other name,



CHRIST, well may it be called "an ointment poured forth," for it signifies his anointing. And that the sweet savor of this name may affect, read but that one passage, Isaiah lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek," etc. What inestimable riches of consolation are there in each of these effects, to which Christ was anointed ! and yet we find not a word among them all for a proud, stiff-necked sinner. Here are "good tidings," but it is to the meek ; comfortable "binding up," but it is for the "broken-hearted ;" liberty, but it is for captives and prisoners groaning under their chains, and desirous to be delivered ; not for such as delight in their bondage. There is "oil of joy," and "garments of praise," but they are provided for mourning dejected spirits that need them ; not for the impenitent. On the contrary, there is a terrible word interjected in the midst of these promises, "The day of vengeance of our God ;" and that is the portion of Christ's enemies, and such are all incorrigible sinners.

When you look through a red glass, the whole heavens seem bloody ; but through pure uncolored glass you receive the clear light that is so refreshing and comfortable to behold. When sin unpardoned is betwixt, and we look on God through that,

we can perceive nothing but anger and enmity in his countenance ; but make Christ once the medium, our pure Redeemer, and through him, as clear transparent glass, the beams of God's favorable countenance shine in upon the soul. The Father cannot look upon his well-beloved Son but graciously and pleasingly. God looks on us out of Christ, sees us rebels, and fit to be condemned ; we look on God as being just and powerful to punish us ; but when Christ is betwixt, God looks on us, in him, as justified, and we look on God, in him, as pacified, and see the smiles of his favorable countenance. Take Christ out, all is terrible ; interpose him, all is full of peace : therefore set him always betwixt, and by him we shall believe in God.

It is the want of activity of faith in Jesus, that keeps us so imperfect, and wrestling still with our corruptions without any advancement. We wrestle in our own strength too often, and so are justly, yea, necessarily foiled : it cannot be otherwise till we make him our strength. This we are still forgetting, and we had need to be put in mind of it, and frequently to recollect it. We shall be at doing for ourselves, and insensibly fall into this folly, even after much smarting for it, if we be not watchful against it ; there is this wretched natural

independency in us that is so hard to beat out. All our projectings are but castles in the air, imaginary buildings without a foundation, till once laid on Christ. But never shall we find heart peace, sweet peace, and progress in holiness, till we be driven from it, to make him all our strength; till we be brought to do nothing, to attempt nothing, to hope or expect nothing, but in him; and then shall we indeed find his fulness and all-sufficiency, and “be more than conquerors through him who hath loved us.”

#### THE SOUL RESIGNED TO CHRIST.

When a soul is busy asking after Jesus Christ, if it be inquired, “What would you do with him?” “Why this is my purpose,” will it say, “I would worship him; I would not only be saved by him, but I would fall down and adore him, and acknowledge him my King; and if I had anything better than another, I would offer it him.” “But what hast thou? Hast thou rich presents for him?” “Alas! no. I am a foolish and a poor creature, and I have nothing to offer.” “Nothing! Hast thou a heart?” “Yes, a heart I have: but, alas! there can be nothing more unfit for him, and unworthy of him; it is dark, and foul, and hard; all disorder and filthiness.” “Yet wilt thou give it

him as it is, and be willing that he use and dispose of it as it pleases him?" "O that he would accept of it, that he would take it upon any terms! Here it is; if it would fly out from this offer, I would he would lay hold of it! O that it were once received by him; that it were in his hand, and then let him do with it what seems him good!" "Sayest thou so? Then it is done. Give it really and freely, and he will take and make it better, at its worst, than all the gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, of all those rich countries where they abound; and will purify, rectify, and make it quite another thing than it is; and it shall never repent thee to have made a gift of it to him. He shall frame it to his own likeness, and in return will give thee himself, and be thine for ever."

#### WHO IS HE THAT CONDEMNETH?

I add yet further, If thou sayest yet that thou findest none of all this, yet I say there is warrant for thee to believe and lay hold on this righteousness here held forth, to the end that thou mayest then find those things in thee, and find comfort in them. Thou art convinced of ungodliness, then believe on him that justifies the ungodly; thou art condemned, yet Christ is dead and risen; flee to him as such, as the Lamb slain, "he that was dead

and is alive," and then say, "Who is he that condemneth?" It is Christ that died, or rather that is risen. Who shall accuse? It is true, they may clamor and make a noise, both Satan and thy conscience, but how can they fasten any accusation on thee? If they dare accuse, yet they cannot condemn, when the Judge, who is greater than all, hath acquitted thee, and declared thee free, and hath the absolute power of the sentence: all charges and libels come too late, after he hath once pronounced a soul righteous. And who shall condemn? "It is Christ that died." If the sentence of the law be brought forth, yet here is the answer—it ought not to be twice satisfied: now once it is in Christ; he hath died, and that stands for the believer. Whosoever flees to him, and lays hold on him for life, he cannot die again; nor canst thou die, for whom he died once—"or rather is risen"—that raises the assurance higher, and sets it firmer; for this evidences that in his death all was paid. When he being the surety and seized on for debt, once death's prisoner, yet was set free, this clears the matter that there is no more to be said. And yet further, in sign that all is done, he is raised to the height of honor above all principalities and powers, he is set at the right hand of the Father; and there he sits, and lives—to make intercession, to sue out the ful-

filling of all for believers, the bringing of them home—lives to see all made good that he died and covenanted for.

#### GLORYING IN CHRIST.

If we knew him rightly, we would not sell the least glance or beam of the light of his countenance for the highest favor of mortal men, though it were constant and unchangeable, which it is not. It is ignorance of Christ that maintains the credit of those vanities we admire. The Christian man that is truly acquainted with him, enamored with the brightness of his beauty, can generously trample upon the smilings of the world with the one foot, and her frownings with the other. If he be rich or honorable, or both, yet he glories not in that; but Christ, who is “the glory of the Lord,” is even then his chiefest glory; and the light of Christ obscures that worldly splendor, in his estimation. And, as the enjoyment of Christ overtops all his other joys, so it overcomes his griefs. As that great light drowns the light of prosperity, so it shines bright in the darkness of affliction: no dungeon so close that can keep out the rays of Christ’s love from his beloved prisoners. The world can no more take away this light than it can give it.

## RULES FOR A HOLY LIFE.

1. Never do anything with obstinacy, being too earnest, or too much given to it ; but with continual meekness of heart and mind, lie at the foot of God, and say, "Lord, I desire nothing, neither in myself, nor in any creature, save only to know and execute thy blessed will." Say alway in thy heart, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do ? Transform my will into thine : fill full, and swallow up as it were, my affections with thy love, and with an insatiable desire to honor thee, and despise myself."

2. If thou aspire to attain to the perfect knitting and union with God, know that it requireth a perfect ex-spoliation, and denudation, or bare nakedness, and utter forsaking of all sin, yea, of all creatures, and of thyself particularly—even that thy mind and understanding, thy affections and desires, thy memory and fancy, be made bare of all things in the world, and all sensual pleasures in them, so as thou wouldst be content that the bread which thou eatest had no more savor than a stone, and yet, from the delectation thou feelest in it, turn thy heart to his praises and love that made it.

3. The more perfectly thou livest in the abstraction, and departure, and bare nakedness of thy mind

from all creatures, the more nakedly and purely shalt thou have the fruition of the Lord thy God, and shalt live the more heavenly and angelical a life. Therefore,

4. Labor above all things most exactly to forsake all for him ; and chiefly to forsake and contemn thyself ; purely loving him, and in a manner forgetting thyself and all things, for the vehement burning love of him : thus thy mind will run so much upon him, that thou wilt take no heed what is sweet or bitter, neither wilt thou consider time or place, nor mark one person from another, for the wonder and love of thy Lord God, and the desire of his blessed will, pleasure, and honor in all things. And whatsoever good thou doest, know and think that God doeth it, and not thou.

5. Choose always (to the best of thy skill) what is most to God's honor, and most like unto Christ and his example, and most profitable to thy neighbor, and most against thy own proper will, and least serviceable to thy own praise and exaltation.

6. If thou continue faithful in this spiritual work and travail, God, at length, without doubt, will hear thy knocking, and will deliver thee from all thy spiritual trouble ; from all the tumults, noise, and incumbrance of cogitations and fancies, and from all earthly affections, which thou canst by no better



means put away, than by continual and fervent desire of the love of God.

7. Do not at any time let or hinder his working, by following thine own will ; for behold, how much thou dost the more perfectly forsake thine own will, and the love of thyself, and of all worldly things, so much the more deeply and safely shalt thou be knit unto God, and increase in his true and pure love.

---

1. Exercise thyself in the knowledge and deep consideration of our Lord God, calling humbly to mind how excellent and incomprehensible he is ; and this knowledge shalt thou rather endeavor to obtain by fervent desire and devout prayer, than by high study and outward labor. It is the singular gift of God, and certainly very precious.

2. Pray, then, "Most gracious Lord, whom to know is the very bliss and felicity of man's soul—and yet none can know thee unless thou wilt open and show thyself unto him—vouchsafe, of thy infinite mercy, now and ever to enlighten my heart and mind to know thee and thy most holy and perfect will, to the honor and glory of thy name. Amen."

3. Then lift up thy heart to consider (not with too great violence, but soberly) the eternal and infi-

nite power of God, who created all things by his excellent wisdom: his unmeasurable goodness, and incomprehensible love; for he is very and only God, most excellent, most high, most glorious, the everlasting and unchangeable goodness, an eternal substance, a charity infinite, so excellent and ineffable in himself, that all dignity, perfection, and goodness, that is possible to be spoken or thought of, cannot sufficiently express the smallest part thereof.

4. Consider Jesus the Redeemer and Husband of thy soul, and walk with him as becomes a chaste spouse, with reverence and lowly shamefulness, obedience and submission.

5. Then turn to the deep, profound consideration of thyself, thine own nothingness, and thy extreme defilement and pollution, thy natural aversion from God, and that thou must, by conversion to him again, and union with him, be made happy.

6. Consider thyself and all creatures as nothing, in comparison of thy Lord; that so thou mayest not only be content, but desirous to be unknown, or being known, to be contemned and despised of all men, yet without thy faults or deservings, as much as thou canst.

7. Pray, "O God, infuse into my heart thy heavenly light and blessed charity, that I may know and love thee above all things; and above all things

loathe and abhor myself. Grant that I may be so ravished in the wonder and love of thee, that I may forget myself and all things; feel neither prosperity nor adversity; may not fear to suffer all the pains of this world rather than to be parted and pulled away from thee, whose perfections infinitely exceed all thought and understanding. O! let me find thee more inwardly and verily present with me than I am with myself; and make me most circumspect how I do use myself in the presence of thee, my holy Lord. Cause me alway to remember how everlasting and constant is the love thou bearest toward me: such a charity and continual care as though thou hadst no more creatures in heaven or earth beside me. What am I? A vile worm."

8. Then aspire to a great contrition for thy sins, and hatred of them, and abhorring of thyself for them; then crave pardon in the blood of Jesus Christ; and then offer up thyself, soul and body, an oblation or sacrifice, in and through him; as they did of old, laying wood on the altar, and then burning up all: so this shall be a sacrifice of sweet savor, and very acceptable to God.

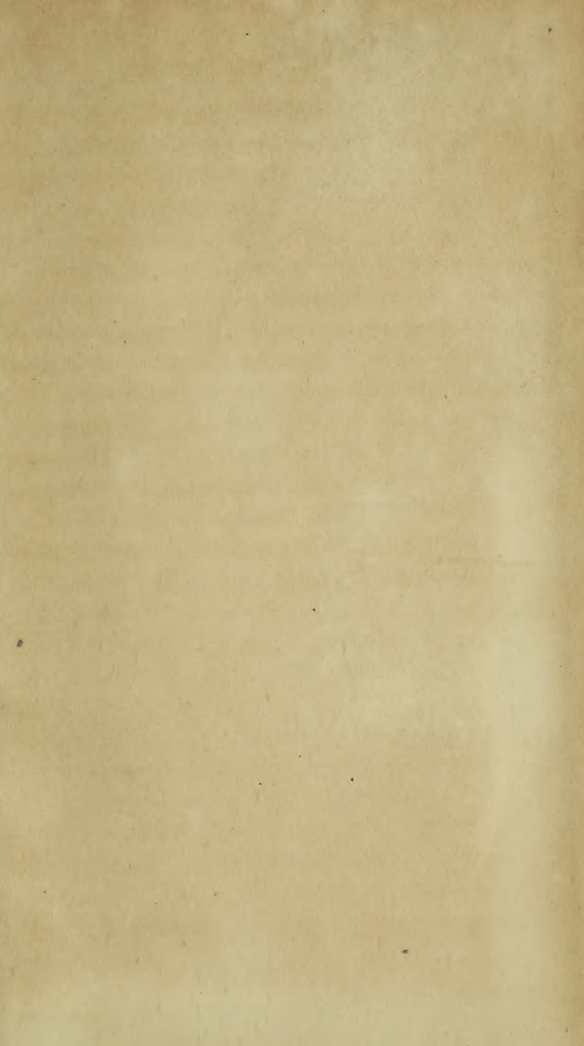
9. Offer all that thou hast, to be nothing, to use nothing of all that thou hast about thee and is called thine, but to his honor and glory; and resolve, through his grace, to use all the powers of thy soul,

and every member of thy body, to his service, as formerly thou hast done to sin.

10. Consider the passion of thy Lord, how he was buffeted, scourged, reviled, stretched with nails on the cross, and hung on it three long hours ; suffered all the contempt and shame, and all the inconceivable pain of it, for thy sake.

11. Then turn thy heart to him, humbly saying, " Lord Jesus, whereas I daily fall, and am ready to sin, vouchsafe me grace, as oft as I shall, to rise again ; let me never presume, but always most meekly and humbly acknowledge my wretchedness and frailty, and repent, with a firm purpose to amend ; and let me not despair because of my great frailty, but ever trust in thy most loving mercy and readiness to forgive."

THE END.



# DATE DUE

AUG 05

Duke University Libraries



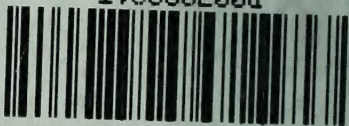
D00798221T

Div.S. 922.341 L529L

The Life of Archbishop Leighton

DATE	ISSUED TO

Duke-LSC



D00798221T